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# ROME REPUBLIC AND EMPIRE

By  
H. W. Household  
M.A. (Oxon.)



VOLUME ONE  
THE REPUBLIC

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TO  
MY WIFE  
WHO LISTENED TO IT ALL  
IN THE MAKING



## PREFACE

*Rome—Republic and Empire* was conceived and written as a companion to my *Hellas the Forerunner*. Its aim is to create interest in Rome's great story among those who know little or no Latin. It is not for Classical Sides: it omits too much that they must have. But it is for all other eager learners, whether they are in senior elementary schools or in secondary schools or in adult classes or studying by themselves at home. Perhaps even the 'public' schools may find a use for it on their Modern Sides.

All history interests if it is properly presented. The human mind comes into being with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, though later mishandling too often converts that thirst into revulsion. The mere mention of some great ringing name—and no name rings quite like that of Rome—is enough to stir a noble curiosity like that which assailed Schliemann when first he heard the deep music of Homer's hexameters, and vowed he would one day learn Greek so that he might read and understand them.

And the story of Rome is full of lessons for us. Her politicians and administrators were confronted by many of the problems that vex us. If we wish to get at the truth of things and fit ourselves, in Bacon's words, 'to weigh and consider,' it must be worth while to watch their attempts to solve them, and learn from their failures and successes.

The opening chapters of my book depart widely from

the strait way by which Rome's story is usually approached. Few of the famous legends will be found in them. On the other hand an attempt has been made to fit the old customs and religious beliefs of Roman and Italian into their place in the scheme of the archaic civilization which is being developed by the modern school of anthropologists. If I am challenged to produce my authority it will be found in the pages of Elliot Smith, Hocart, and Perry.

The present volume ends with the death of Caesar. I hope to be able to tell the story of the Empire in a second volume, and to show Europe, a Roman Europe, in the making.

I have to thank the publishers of the following books for kindly allowing me to quote certain passages from them:

Edith Hamilton, *The Roman Way*. J. M. Dent & Sons.  
Henderson, *The Study of Roman History*. Gerald Duckworth & Co.

Warde Fowler, *Social Life at Rome*. Macmillan & Co.

Mackail, *Latin Literature*. John Murray.

Rhoades, *Poems of Virgil*. Oxford University Press.

MacIver, *Italy before the Romans*. The Clarendon Press.

Stuart Jones, *Companion to Roman History*. The Clarendon Press.

Rogers and Harley, *Roman Home Life and Religion*. The Clarendon Press.

Bailey, *The Legacy of Rome*. The Clarendon Press.

Strachan-Davidson, *Cicero*. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Myres, *The Dawn of History* ('Home University Library'). Thornton Butterworth.

Warde Fowler, *Rome* ('Home University Library'). Thornton Butterworth.

For the *Odes* of Horace I have used De Vere's verse translations, an old favourite of nearly fifty years. The little book was published in 1888 by Walter Scott, a firm no longer in existence. I hope the owners of the copyright will accept this grateful acknowledgment of the debt I owe them.

I have also to thank the Editor of *The Nineteenth Century and After* for kindly permitting me to use my translation of a poem of Catullus which appeared in that magazine.

Mommsen's *History of Rome*, Roberts's translation of Livy, Macdevitt's translation of Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, and Clough's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, all published by Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons in Everyman's Library, have been constantly in my hands, and I have quoted freely from them.

H. W. H

March 1936.



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## CHAPTER I

### ORIGINS

THE early history of Rome has no foundation to rest upon but tradition and the work of the archaeologist. The people who lived in Italy before the Latins entered the peninsula from beyond the Alps were illiterate: they left no written records. And such scanty annals as told the story of Rome under its kings, and under the infant republic that succeeded them, perished almost without exception when the Gauls burnt the city in 390 B.C.

Of the earliest times even tradition has little or nothing to tell us. The Roman was an unimaginative, rather silent, and very practical person, and he left behind him no such wealth of myth as did the Greek. We have to depend, therefore, almost entirely upon the spade of the archaeologist for our information. Fortunately it has revealed much in recent years.

As for the value of tradition, during the last hundred and fifty years opinion has veered through almost the entire circle. In the eighteenth century it was accepted with almost unquestioning faith, and rated far beyond its true worth. The account of the historian Livy, written just before and just after the commencement of the Christian era, was accepted as good authority for the beginnings of Rome, just as the books of Genesis and Exodus were accepted as good authority for the early history of Israel, with just the difference that his tales of miracles were not believed, while those of the Old Testament were accepted as a matter of course in that uncritical age.

Then came a period of doubt. Tradition was challenged,

and for a time lost all its honour. Mommseff, the great German scholar whose *History of Rome* was published some eighty years ago, treated 'the story of the foundation of Rome by refugees from Alba under the leadership of the sons of an Alban prince, Romulus and Remus,' with contempt. 'Such tales,' he says, 'which profess to be historical but are merely improvised explanations of no very ingenious character, it is the first duty of history to dismiss.'<sup>1</sup> But to-day we need not give up our Romulus and Remus so lightly.

If the Maoris migrating from island to island down the Pacific to New Zealand could recite the generations of their chiefs accurately for several hundred years back, as it has been proved that they could, we need not to-day scruple to accept from oral tradition the twin boys Romulus and Remus, though their father was a god and their mother a virgin, and though Romulus became a god at death; for we know now what such gods were and how they arose, and we shall find that this story closely resembles a number of others which are certainly founded on fact.<sup>2</sup>

But the beginnings of our story will take us back a thousand years and more before Romulus and Remus founded their city on the Palatine Hill by the Tiber in or about 753 B.C., and here the discoveries of the archaeologist must be our sole authority.

It has been said that the history of Italy is the history<sup>3</sup> of her invaders. The Latin race to which the Romans belonged were themselves invaders, and they were not<sup>3</sup> the first. Let us get back to the earliest of them, though behind even those there lie the men of the Old Stone Age, the Palaeolithic men, who for unnumbered millennia roamed the dense Italian forests as food-gatherers and hunters, a scanty population of homeless wanderers. Of agriculture they knew nothing. It was not until, at a probable conjecture, somewhere between 5000 and 4000

<sup>1</sup> *History of Rome*, vol. i, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> See Hocart, *Kingship*, p. 9.

## ORIGINS

B.C. that man learnt in Egypt—the Nile taught him—to sow seed one year in faith that he would reap its harvest in the next. Then people ceased to wander in search of food. The land they tilled tied them to itself. They could now live close together. The village and then the town became possible. A man no longer depended entirely upon himself for the satisfaction of his needs. With the division of labour the arts and crafts developed. Population increased rapidly, and before long a movement outwards began. Emigration became necessary, for the land could not support the growing numbers. Some had to move on.

It was such an outward movement that peopled all the shores of the Mediterranean with their aboriginal population. Out of North Africa came the slender, brown, long-headed, peaceful agricultural folk known as the Mediterranean race, who have always formed the majority of the population of Italy, as of Greece, Spain, Egypt, and the coasts of the Levant and Asia Minor, absorbing and converting ultimately to their own type, and even to many of their customs and beliefs, each invader in succession.

We can still trace the routes by which these people entered Italy, for they blazed their trail with their religious monuments, their habitations, and their burial-places. They crossed the sea at the two points where in much earlier days the old land bridges had stood, that joined Africa to Spain and Sicily, before the Atlantic Ocean burst its way through into the midland sea. The western stream came along the east coast of Spain, and entered the north of Italy by the Riviera; the eastern peopled Sicily and the south. The two did not come into touch again until historic times.

These people took with them from Africa the knowledge of agriculture and of cattle-rearing; but the mountains and the dense forests of oak and chestnut in Italy made the task of subduing the land to the plough a slow one. They made clearings in the forest round their wattle and

daub huts, a few families together in hamlets or tiny villages. The huts were hollowed out inside to a depth of two or three feet, and the excavator of to-day finds the hole filled with the refuse that reveals to him the way of life of the people who dwelt in them.

The next invasion, still a peaceful one, came from the north beyond the Alps, where also, under the influence of agriculture and mining, population was now growing rapidly. These people belonged to the Alpine stock, short, dark, round-headed people, very unlike the Mediterranean race. Entering by the north-west corner of Italy, apparently from Switzerland, they made their way gradually along the whole chain of the Italian lakes from Maggiore to Garda a little before 2000 B.C., just as copper and bronze were coming into use. They constructed for themselves the curious lake-dwellings of which Herodotus saw and described examples north of the Aegean.

The water-logged valley of the Po interposed at this time an impenetrable barrier against all entrance into the Italian peninsula from the north—a barrier of swamp and fenland in its lower course, of dense oak forest higher up. Neither land nor water seemed to offer any welcome. But these new-comers were just the people to deal with difficulties of this description. They cleared away the forest by the lake shore, and with the trees they built out a pier of piles into the water, and on the piles constructed a platform approached by a narrow bridge which was easily blocked or withdrawn. On the platform were built their huts and storehouses. 'And this,' says Herodotus,<sup>1</sup> 'is the way in which they live. Each has his own hut, wherein he dwells, upon one of the platforms, and each has also a trap-door giving access to the lake beneath; and their wont is to tie their baby children by the foot with a string, to save them from rolling into the water. They feed their horses and their other beasts upon fish, which abound in the lake to such a degree that a man has only to open a trap-door and let down a basket by a rope

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii, p. 6.

into the water, and then to wait a very short time, when he draws it up quite full of them.'

The space for such settlements between land and deep water is limited. They can only extend along the shore. As soon therefore as all the vacant sites round one lake were occupied, once more the swarming movement was repeated and some of the inhabitants had to set out in search of another. The process was repeated again and again until all the Italian lakes were ringed round with villages of this description.

About 1700 B.C., some three hundred years after the arrival of the lake-dwellers, a new and much more important body of immigrants, still in the main of peaceful ways, descended from the Alps. They had come from the region of the Danube. Living on one of the busiest trade routes of the day, they had reached a stage of civilization much in advance of that of the lake-dwellers, and were by this time highly skilled in agriculture and in the working of metals. Their arrival introduced the full Bronze Age into Italy, and opened up communication with the commercial and industrial life that was developing behind the Alps.

These new people constructed their dwellings in much the same fashion as the lake-dwellers, but with one important difference. They built them on the land and not upon the water. There was little else in which the two peoples were alike. They differed in their speech, and they differed in their burial customs, always a sure indication of origin among early peoples. All their predecessors had buried their dead in the ground, but these new-comers burned them.

As all the lake-side sites were already occupied the new-comers pushed out into the fens that fringed the Po and up the tributaries that feed it, and they built their villages, the so-called 'terremare,' in the swamps and even on dry land. So by degrees the valley of the Po was drained, and the dense forest cleared.

It may be asked what all this has to do with the history

of Rome. The answer is that each of these different peoples contributed something that went to the moulding of the character, customs, and religion of the Roman—a something that can frequently be traced back to its source—and the 'terremare' folk are believed to have been the direct ancestors of the Latins, the first invaders of Italian stock to enter Italy.

One need not suppose that on their first entrance into Italy there were many of these people, or that they came as conquerors, but they were a gifted race, and they shared with all the peoples of the Aryan stock a curious genius for imposing their language, and much of their religion and social customs, upon the folk among whom they settled. So it came to pass that out of the fusion of the three stocks—Mediterranean, Alpine, and Aryan—a united people sprang, that later was pushed southward by new invaders—warriors this time—of closely allied speech, till at last they came to rest in the land that was to be called Latium<sup>1</sup> and give them their name of Latins; and there in Latium the history of its imperial people opens.

<sup>1</sup> A plain country some seven hundred square miles in extent, the size of a small English county.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY CUSTOMS AND RELIGION

WE have brought the Latin into Italy, but it will be well before passing on to the founding of Rome to give some account of the customs and religion that he brought with him, or acquired from the older folk who were there before him. And first something must be said about those villages which he left behind him in the valley of the Po—villages strangely preserved by time, though never inhabited again—for their plan has a good deal to tell us.

The 'terremare' village was laid out with the method and precision of a skilled surveyor. One side always faced a river or a stream. From the ends of that side two parallel lines were driven backwards, and these were joined by the fourth side, which formed a right angle with each of them. The whole space was surrounded by a moat and palisade, and was approached from outside by a single wooden bridge on piles. The interior was laid out in blocks, chess-board pattern, with streets parallel to each other and intersecting at right angles. Here it seems beyond doubt is the original pattern of the Roman camp, and of the colonies which the Romans in later days planted as garrisons up and down Italy, or as outposts of empire beyond it, as they advanced the frontiers of the State. 'The spirit of order,' it has been said, 'which evidently animated these settlers, stamps them as the ancestors of the people who were to furnish the models of law and government to succeeding ages.'<sup>1</sup>

And the bridge so vital to the safety of the settlement—it is a bridge on piles of the very pattern of that wooden bridge over Tiber that Horatius defended. In that

<sup>1</sup> Stuart Jones, *Companion to Roman History*, p. 4.



bridge down to the latest times there might be no taint of iron, not so much as a nail; so strict was the old ritual rule for its construction handed down by tradition<sup>o</sup> from the days when iron was unknown. It was so too with Solomon's temple at Jerusalem.

The early engineer who built this bridge was called a 'pontifex'—bridge-builder. He understood the mystery of measures and numbers, and was skilled in the ritual as well as in the science of bridge-building. And none would dare to build a bridge without fulfilling all that ritual required lest the ill-will of the gods should descend upon it. He, the pontifex, knew the omens, knew what the signs from heaven foretold, and what the sacrifice. So the name attached to priests in later days. The chief of them all was the Pontifex Maximus, a Roman noble in the days of the Republic, the Emperor himself afterwards, for there was no separate order of priests in the old religion of Rome. And by right descent from these early bridge-builders the Pope is Pontifex to-day.

The city wall was as important as the bridge and as sacred. Before a stone of a city wall could be laid a furrow was traced out by a white bull and a white heifer drawing a plough with a share of bronze. No unhallowed upstart iron for such a task! That furrow so marked out would be a boundary that no unholy things, no evil spirits or enemies, could pass.

Spirits were everywhere, some friendly, more hostile. If you cut down ancient forest to win land for cornfields you disturbed a host of the hostile. They must be kept at all costs beyond the boundaries of your fields and villages, and the kindly spirits who dwelt within them must be won for helpers. What way could be better than a solemn procession round all the boundaries leading the choice victims, a pig, a sheep, and a bull, that would be sacrificed when the tour had been completed? <sup>1</sup> Folk still 'beat the bounds' in many parts of Europe, though they no longer know why it was first done.

<sup>1</sup> The Roman festival of the Ambarvalia towards the end of May.

The fear of evil powers, of the wrath of all the powers of heaven and earth, had sunk deep into the mind of man. Even the spirits of the dead, originally thought of as kindly and made welcome in the house, were now more often feared. People wanted no 'ghosts' about; we don't to-day. And of course if the dead had been wronged in life they were doubly dangerous. Then indeed it was time to do what you could to free yourself from their pursuit. Everybody knows the story of the fight of the three Horatii of Rome against the three Curiatii of Alba. When the victorious survivor of the Horatii was on his way back to the city his sister met him and, recognizing her lover's arms among the trophies that he carried, broke into lamentation before all the army. In his wrath he took his sword and killed her too. To free him from the pursuit of her avenging ghost he was sent under a yoke made of two beams set upright in the ground with a third laid across them. That brushed the ghost aside: it could not pass. The Sister's Beam, as it was called, was repaired from time to time, and still stood in Rome in the days of Augustus. The same thing was done to the soldiers of a defeated army. They were sent under a yoke made of three spears. It was originally an act of mercy, for it freed them from pursuit by the angry spirits of the Roman dead. But the purpose was forgotten, and in historic times to be sent under the yoke was the deadliest dishonour that an army could be made to suffer. The Samnites subjected the beaten Romans to it after the battle of the Caudine Forks.

What does all this mean? Why did the Romans and all the peoples of the ancient world do these odd things, and a hundred other things as odd, many of which are still done in quiet corners even by civilized peoples to this day? Some of course do them just because they have always been done: but there are backward peoples, savages who have reached the agricultural stage, who do them with a purpose. They too imagine themselves to be surrounded by a multitude of unseen powers whose good

will they must win, or against whose enmity they must protect themselves.

A study of these people and their customs makes it plain that they are degenerate children of the archaic civilization who still practise those earliest forms of science and religion that have descended to them by devious ways from Egypt, as descended the male gods and temples of Greece and Rome, of India, Scandinavia, and Germany, of Mexico and Peru.

The first god was almost certainly a dead Egyptian king, and the earliest king was one whom all obeyed because he brought them new knowledge and new power of enormous value and importance to their lives. He had taught them how to grow corn, how to lead the Nile water over the land to irrigate it, and he or a successor taught them how to measure the year. They committed to him the control of the land, that for the first time gained a value to the individual, and became the subject of separate ownership, and the control of their collective labour which was needed for the creation and management of the irrigation system, the intricate system of canals, that distributed the fertilizing water over the land of Egypt. It was his business, too, to foretell by his knowledge of the calendar the day on which the Nile flood would begin—or did he god-like make it begin?—to see that all was in readiness for it, and to give orders for the opening and in due course for the closing of the sluice-gates.

This, or something like this, was the beginning of civilization in its earliest home.

For reasons which there is no space to discuss here, the Egyptians believed that if the bodies of the dead could be preserved from corruption, the spirit that was supposed to dwell in them lived on. Of the body of a dead king therefore a peculiar care was taken, for would not he, who had done so much for them in life, continue to bless and protect land and people after death? So they mummified his body and made a portrait statue for the reception of

his spirit, and invented a ritual for its propitiation. ✓ The first king whose body was treated with special honour was the first god, and his son, the new king, was the first priest. At death he too became a god, and before long the living king himself was worshipped as a god. The term 'god' at first meant just that—an all-powerful king alive or dead. ✓ It was well understood in the ancient world that the earliest gods were men.

Now those earliest gods were wholly beneficent. All their works were good. The new crops grew and food was abundant as never before; city life developed and with it the arts and crafts; man's mental vision expanded, and he lived in a comfort unknown before. But soon it became too plain that, if the god wished nothing but good for his people, there must be some other power about that was always trying to thwart him. The Nile flood did not reach its proper height, the crops failed and there was famine; or it rose too high and there was a disastrous flood. The red rust attacked the wheat; the weeds were always trying to choke it; the cattle sickened and died. War and slavery entered into the life of man, and with them fear. The Golden Age, the age of innocence, had ended. Man looked about him sorrowfully and said: 'An enemy hath done this.' And there were so many enemies. It came about therefore that before many centuries had passed the Egyptians, and those who inherited their culture from them, believed that there lay around them a multitude of powers, friendly and unfriendly, whose influence they knew and felt in all their works and ways. They were in the sun and moon and all the host of heaven, in the storm and the earthquake, in hills and sea, in lake and river, in all water-springs, in woodlands, in the growing crops,<sup>1</sup> in the doorway of the house, about the hearth,<sup>2</sup> in the store-cupboard<sup>3</sup>—everywhere.

One half of the Roman religion, the half that came in with the Mediterranean race, consisted largely of obser-

<sup>1</sup> The Lar; <sup>2</sup> The Vesta; <sup>3</sup> The Penates, of the Roman religion.

vances, of magic, designed to propitiate or to exclude these powers.

And there was worse to come, for the strange belief developed that unless the king were young and strong and vigorous the crops would not grow or the cattle multiply. So the people killed their king-god as soon as the first signs of age appeared. And his blood had a magic power: it made things grow. He had laid down his life for his people's good. But the day came when the king refused to be a sacrifice, and the first-born son was substituted for his father. And later still he would send out his servants to catch prisoners beyond the borders of the country,<sup>1</sup> and they, poor hapless ones, were sacrificed instead, and ever more and more of them, that their blood, by its magic power might ensure fertility and avert the onset of foes of every kind, whether the spirits that lurked about the cornfield or the invading army that beset the city wall. So in 310 B.C. the Carthaginians sent hundreds of the children of their noblest families into the flames as a sacrifice to Moloch when their city was besieged by Agathocles and his Syracusans: so the Aztecs of Mexico in the sixteenth century A.D. slaughtered their victims in tens of thousands at their hideous festivals: so, ere they went out to war, Jew and Greek and Roman, so the Briton and the Gaul and many another people at one time habitually offered human victims to their gods. And when we read of Roman consuls devoting themselves to the gods of the under-world that they might save their armies in the crisis of a doubtful battle, we shall know that here is a modified survival of the grim practice. Then, as time went on, animals were substituted for the human victims. Their blood flowed in the temple at Jerusalem, as it flowed at the chief festivals of every village in Italy, to propitiate the powers that protected man.

To the King-god in Egypt Ré the Sun-god succeeded, and rose in the days of the fifth Dynasty (2750-2625 B.C.) to the supreme position among the growing host of deities.

<sup>1</sup> Possibly the earliest form of war.

What more natural? He was Lord of the Sky, of Heaven. He fixed the year. The seasons followed him. His rays as they gathered strength in spring called the buried seed to life, and in due course ripened it. The Nile obeyed him in its rise and fall. No other god had power immediate and visible as he. One thing only was lacking to him. The earlier gods of human origin had their sons and successors to build them temples and preside over their worship. He had none. The priests of Heliopolis—the City of the Sun—supplied the want. They taught the people to believe that he, whose creative power all thought they saw in vegetation, was the very father of the Pharaoh. It may seem amazing, incredible, to us, but it did not shock the reason in those days. It fitted in naturally with the scheme of things. So from that time onwards, the generations of the Children of the Sun dwelt after death in Heaven, the Sky-world, with their Father, instead of in the Under-world where Osiris ruled over the rest of the dead, until he too was promoted to the Sky.

These Children of the Sun—sons and daughters of the god by a mortal virgin, who in Egypt was always one of the royal house, and often a sister of the Pharaoh—went round the world. The Bible knew them. Pizarro found them in Peru observing the same strange customs: the Mikado of Japan is descended from them. Perseus in Greek myth is a son of the Sun, and so are Romulus and Remus—they were often twins. And because the idea of men becoming gods and being the sons of gods was perfectly familiar to the ancient world, there was nothing unnatural in Julius Caesar, and the Roman Emperors who inherited his power, being worshipped, as gods during life and after death.

About the middle of the second millennium B.C. the power of the Children of the Sun suffered a permanent eclipse. The nobles, jealous of the privileged position which set them apart from the rest of mankind, rose against them and killed or banished them, and Egyptian story knows them no more. The survivors scattered far and wide, to

reappear sometimes as kindly gods from 'heaven,' the sky-world, to instruct backward peoples in the art of agriculture, the mystery of the calendar, and the rites associated with Sun-worship; sometimes in a new and terrible guise as War-gods, those scourges of humanity who were to plunge the peaceful lands of the archaic civilization in the miseries that Hesiod describes in his *Works and Days*. They penetrated on expeditions like that of the famous Argonauts to the Danube countries, and armed with the bright iron found there the greedy hordes who prowled about the fringes of the empires of the East, and hailed the War-gods who would lead them to the easy plunder there awaiting them. All the discontented and unruly elements of the old empires flocked to them, and they were welded by discipline and a common aim into war-bands whose power was out of all proportion to their numbers, which were never large. Homer's *Odyssey* is full of stories of their adventures; and the story of the founding of Rome looks like another such.

But the sons of the War-gods were gods no longer, for their mothers were not of the royal line; but they and their descendants for many a generation would claim a god for their ancestor. Such was the descent of Julius Caesar, such the descent of the Saxon kings who traced their line from Odin. So the fierce Dorians, who descended destroying upon Greece in the eleventh century B.C., were led by the two co-equal kings whose ancestor was Heracles (Hercules), a son of the Sun who at death had joined his father in 'heaven.' And, though no tradition has preserved the story, it seems certain that a second and fiercer Aryan wave descended upon Italy somewhere between 1200 and 1000 B.C., following the Latins after a long interval and displacing them, as the Dorians displaced other Greek-speaking peoples who had entered Hellas before them. These later and fiercer Italians included the Sabines and Samnites and other hill tribes with whom Rome was to have so severe a struggle in later days. The

second King of Rome, Numa Pompilius, came of this stock. He was a Sabine. Had he been a Latin his name would have been Numa Quinquilius.

With these last invaders, it would seem, entered the Sky-gods and War-gods Jupiter, Quirinus, Mars, and the rest, brought by the ruling families who claimed descent from them—gods in whom the mass of the people, the aborigines, took little interest. Only members of those ruling families—the patricians—could minister to these gods of theirs, the gods of the State religion. That was one of the causes of the long quarrel between patrician and plebeian that plays so large a part in the early history of Rome. How new a thing the State religion was, is made plain by the fact that under the early kings there was still not a temple in the city. The old gods asked but groves and altars. The first temples were built upon the Capitol under the kings of Etruscan origin. And as these gods of the State religion—the gods of the ruling families—were the last to come, so they were the first to go when Christianity came into competition with it. It was the old religion and its multitudinous observances that lingered on longest; for the *pagani*, the folk of the villages, clung to it even though in obedience to their superiors they submitted to baptism and called themselves Christians. For a thousand years and more, in spite of the repeated orders and reprimands of the bishops, they continued to observe the old familiar ritual expected by the powers of spring and field and forest, of hearth and home. They brought the old offerings, danced the old dances, sang the old songs, acted the old plays—the songs and dances and plays that survive as folk-songs, folk-dances, and folk-drama of to-day. The very dances can be shown to have been danced in Egypt.



## CHAPTER III

### ROME UNDER THE KINGS: 753-509 B.C.

'No one,' it has been said, 'who has ever stood on the Janiculum,<sup>1</sup> and looked down on the river and the city, and across the Latin plain to the Alban mountain and the long line of hills—the last spurs of the Apennines—enclosing the plain to the north, can fail to realize that Rome was originally an outpost of the Latins, her kinsmen and confederates, against the powerful and uncanny Etruscan race who dwelt in the undulating hill country to the north.'<sup>2</sup>

History, if it is to be intelligible, must always have geography and the map for allies; and this is perhaps even more than usually true of Italian history. Between the Alps and the Apennines lies the valley of the Po, a region that was not Romanized until quite late, for the Apennines and not the Alps were the boundary of early Italy upon the north. For centuries the Po valley was a cause of constant anxiety to Rome. It belonged rather to the transalpine lands of Central Europe than to the Italian peninsula, for there from the fifth century, when in his hordes he drove out the Etruscan settlers, dwelt the dreaded enemy the Gaul, the nearest of that avalanche of barbarians that might at any time break loose. It was Cisalpine Gaul.<sup>3</sup> Not until Caesar's great campaigns in Gaul itself (France) had pushed back the frontier to the Rhine could Rome feel safe. And even then the storm-clouds still hung beyond the distant frontier, and the

<sup>1</sup> The hill on the west, or Etruscan, side of the Tiber, where there was a strong outpost defending the bridge-head.

<sup>2</sup> Warde Fowler, *Social Life at Rome*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Gaul this side of the Alps.

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## THE REPUBLIC

aching there could always hear the muttering under.

peninsula is a mountainous country. The Apennines, after running roughly west to east in a great curve across the head of it, turn south at a little distance from the Adriatic, and run down its whole length dividing it like a great backbone; but the backbone always lies much nearer to the east coast than the west. On the eastern side of Italy the mountains descend sharply to the sea; the rivers are short and rapid, and the coast lacks harbours. On the west, where the mountains stand back from the coast, are the plains of Etruria, Latium, and Campania. South of the Po there is only one river of any importance, the Tiber. It cuts the peninsula in two about the middle, and after leaving the mountains some twenty-five miles from the sea, flows along the northern edge of the plain of Latium, and where at Ostia it enters the sea a port arose, the only one that gave access to the centre of the peninsula. Twenty miles up the river—about fifteen from the sea by the nearest route—was the site of the outpost so apt for the defence of Latium against a northern foe. It lay at a point where an island and some shoals interrupted navigation and was secure against attack from the sea; and it offered a natural crossing-place where was to stand the famous bridge on piles that might have no fragment of iron in its timbers. It was marked out by every natural advantage as the site of the future capital of Italy. Its position as a seaport brought in the foreign sailor and the foreign merchant with their wider knowledge and experience. A more rapid growth was certain than could have awaited any inland town; while in Latium, the plain country, a federation of the little cities—the thirty—was more easily effected than the federation of the neighbouring hill tribes, separated from each other as they were by mountain barriers. And once those who occupied that site could dispose of armies and dream of conquest, its central position would enable them to prevent any union of north

and south against them. They could strike swiftly in all directions, moving, to use the soldier's phrase, on inner lines.\*

But these advantages did not secure immediate recognition. The earliest metropolis of Latium, the leader of its thirty cities, was Alba perched on the Alban Mountain, one of those magnificent natural fortresses that the pre-historic folk long before the Latins came chose and loved for other reasons than their mere military value. They were 'High Places,' and holy. The Acropolis was such a one; Israel knew them, and so did the pre-Celtic inhabitants of Britain who lived and worshipped at Maiden Castle,<sup>1</sup> at Camelot and Old Sarum, and flocked to great religious festivals at Avebury.

Alba had always been the centre of the common worship of the thirty cities, and there upon the Mountain, even after the city had been destroyed by the young Rome, the Latin festival was held down to the latest days. Strong, however, as the hill site was, it protected only those who occupied it: it afforded no defence of the plain of Latium against the Etruscans north of the Tiber.

But if the Rome of history really began as an outpost of the Latins against the northern enemy, that does not mean that the site had remained entirely unoccupied until the day when some leader with a soldier's eye, be it Romulus or another, strengthened it and put a garrison there 'to hold the bridge.' The legends suggest that its earliest occupants were no very reputable folk. It may well have been 'an "Asylum," or City of Refuge, for ne'er-do-wells on both banks';<sup>2</sup> and likely enough its earliest industry was the blackmail of passers-by, for none could cross the river unless these folk permitted.

The Roman calendar counted its years from the founding of the city by Romulus. The equivalent year in our era is 753 B.C. Then, according to the story, the

<sup>1</sup> Where in the oldest part of the settlement recent excavation revealed no more formidable weapons than mere sling-stones.

<sup>2</sup> Myres, *The Dawn of History*, p. 235.

first band of adventurers gathered upon the Palatine Hill under the young war-chief of divine origin and soon afterwards looked around for wives.

Included within the earliest city was a village of Sabines on the Quirinal, and between it and the Palatine in the marshy ground at the foot of the hills lay the common meeting-place and market, the future Forum.

Each village had its petty king, Romulus the Latin and Titus Tatius the Sabine, and if it is true that 'uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,' still more uneasy will lie a pair of crowned heads in a single townlet. And the little town itself was divided into two factions that lay together as uneasily. A curious ceremony survived to perpetuate the memory of their early feud in 'one of the oldest sacred customs of the later Rome, the sacrifice of the October horse offered in the Campus Martius; down to a late period a struggle took place at this festival for the horse's head between the men of the Subura and those of the Via Sacra, and according as victory lay with the former or with the latter, the head was nailed either to the Mamilian Tower (site unknown) in the Subura, or to the king's palace under the Palatine. It was the two halves of the old city that thus competed with each other on equal terms.'<sup>1</sup>

Presently, as was natural in a city frequented by seamen and foreign traders, an 'East End' began to grow upon the Aventine hill, the furthest downstream. These people had no connection with any of the native clans who, with their petty chieftains and retainers, poor relations, and hangers-on, were more like the Highland clans of the eighteenth century than anything else in our own history. But such foreigners contribute a useful mixing to the blood, and stimulate the intelligence. And the wealth that some of them gathered gave them a position that in due course enabled them to stand up to the patricians, the men of blue blood, and the clansmen their poor cousins.

Around these new-comers, to form the plebeian class,

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. i, p. 50.

gathered the small farmers and the landless dependants of the patricians, the hangers-on just referred to, folk of the old Mediterranean race who had no blood connection with the clans nor any part or lot in their religion.

Between patricians and plebeians in the days to come there was to be a long and bitter struggle, for the patricians when the kings were gone usurped all power and privilege. They wanted all the good things for themselves, office and land and the favour of the gods—their gods. The plebeians, who had no claim upon the gods, might fight for Rome, and they could vote at the election of the consuls so long as their votes did not count for too much,<sup>1</sup> and when things went well they should have corn cheap or even free at the cost of the State so that they might not starve. But they could claim nothing as of right—certainly not State land, not one idle acre of it.

Titus Tatius the Sabine kinglet after a time was killed in some local disturbance, and thereafter Romulus, perhaps not altogether regretfully, ruled alone. When he died and became a god it is plain that the Sabine element of the population had the upper hand for a time, for he was succeeded not by a Latin but by the Sabine Numa Pompilius as sole king. But the old dual system had deep roots, and when after seven kings had ruled in succession Tarquinius Superbus, the seventh and last, was expelled, it shot up again, and two consuls were elected each year to rule the new republic, and not infrequently to quarrel over the discharge of their high duties: and most of the other officers between whom the lesser royal functions were distributed also worked in pairs.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 27.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ETRUSCANS

It is time that something was said of the Etruscans, who have already been mentioned several times, that people to the north against whose pressure the new settlement by the Tiber was to be a shield and spear-head protecting Latium. There was a time, as we have seen, when the defence did not hold. Etruscans ruled in Rome, and Etruscan influence did much, directly and indirectly, to mould the character of the Roman and train him for his task.

The Roman of the early days was a very different person from the Roman of the later Republic and the Empire. Even so late as the fourth century B.C. 'he was extremely backward compared with several other nations in Italy,' 'The Senate that awed the invading Gauls was composed of exceedingly rude forefathers of the hamlet.'<sup>1</sup> Their homes, in spite of the example set by the Etruscan kings, were still no better than mere mud-brick dwellings, and as bare within as they were without. It was not until the Gauls had broken the power of the Etruscan cities for her that Rome burst in upon the wealth heaped up behind their walls.

Constant warfare left the Romans no leisure for literature or the arts, and in their early days they scorned all luxury. The historian Livy,<sup>2</sup> writing under the Empire, lamented<sup>3</sup> in the preface to his *History*, as the poets Virgil<sup>4</sup> and Horace<sup>5</sup> lamented (voicing all of them the anxiety of contemporary statesmen and soldiers), the steady decline of the national character, and he bids his reader observe:

'How at first it slowly sinks, then slips downward more

<sup>1</sup> MacIver, *Italy before the Romans*, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> 59 B.C.-A.D. 17

<sup>3</sup> 70-19 B.C.

<sup>4</sup> 65-8 B.C.

and more rapidly, and finally begins to plunge into head-long ruin, until he reaches these days, in which we can bear neither our diseases nor their remedies.' <sup>1</sup>

An age degenerate and base  
Piles, as it wastes, disgrace upon disgrace.  
We, nursed in crime, in folly bred,  
Transmit our fathers' taint, the subtle poison spread,  
Beget a progeny still worse,  
And heap on endless years an ever-deepening curse.<sup>2</sup>

It was what he learnt from the luxurious and degenerate peoples whom he conquered, the Etruscans and the ease-loving Greeks of the south, that first tempted the Roman from the path of duty and undermined his stern simplicity of life.

Who the Etruscans were and where they came from is a much-debated problem. Perhaps we may follow those who would see in them the descendants of one of the bands of sea-raiders whose invasions of the Delta the Egyptian annals record so frequently in the thirteenth century B.C. In such a raid <sup>3</sup> about 1230 B.C. the Tursha took a hand, and these Tursha are thought to have been the ancestors of the Turseni who, early it would seem in the eighth century B.C., settled in and gave their name to Etruria (Tuscany), where they dominated and fused with the earlier population much as the Normans dominated and fused with the Saxons in England.

They were accomplished in all the arts and culture of the East, and their splendid tombs in Caere and Praeneste were full of exquisite gold work and of a wealth of jewellery and bronzes and carved ivory and silver bowls: and that at a time when the Roman counted his wealth in cumbrous pounds of copper of which it would have taken about thirty to make the equivalent of a pre-war British sovereign.

Though inscriptions in the Etruscan language written in Greek characters are abundant, no one has yet been able to interpret them, and it is impossible to say to what

<sup>1</sup> Preface, vol. i, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Horace, *Odes*, III. vi. 45-8 (De Vere).

<sup>3</sup> For a description of such raids see *Hellas the Forerunner*, vol. i, p. 20.



family of speech it belongs. The people, short sturdy folk with large heads and thick arms, were as mysterious as their language. In their customs and their religion they were utterly unlike the other peoples who dwelt about them; and difference as usual awoke in their neighbours distrust and dislike, to which the gloomy devil-haunted rites of the Etruscan religion added a feeling of horror, a shuddering fear.

By the end of the eighth century B.C. the Etruscans held the coast between the Arno and the Tiber, but had not yet advanced further south. Later, however, they pushed their way down through Latium into Campania and founded there the wealthy and powerful city of Capua.

For some considerable portion of the 244 years that elapsed between the founding of Rome in 753 B.C. and the expulsion of the kings in 509 the Etruscans were certainly masters of Rome itself, and their occupation of the city left an enduring mark upon it and its inhabitants. Always thereafter one of the divisions of the city was known as the Tuscan quarter. They were great builders, and it was from them that the Romans learnt how to use the arch, which distinguishes their architecture from that of Egypt and Greece with its rows of columns supporting horizontal courses of masonry that imitated the wooden beams of the earliest buildings. The Cloaca Maxima, the huge sewer that drained the Forum, was Etruscan work. No Roman farmers of that day could have built it.

Perhaps one of the most characteristic customs of the Romans of later days was the gladiatorial show. Wherever the Roman soldier went there was an amphitheatre. Even at Caerleon-on-Usk,<sup>1</sup> on the western frontier of the remotest western province of the Empire, where were the headquarters of one of the three legions that formed the army of occupation, there remains to-day a beautiful example. It was the funeral games of the Etruscan

<sup>1</sup> Caerleon is a corruption of *Castra Legionum*, the Fortress of the Legions, the name given in after days to the Roman fortress of Isca, which is the same word as Usk.

nobles that first introduced into Italy the practice of pitting slaves or prisoners-of-war against each other in mortal combat for the entertainment of the public. From Etruria, too, came the curule chair (the chariot-seat), which was the emblem of the kingly power, and which, under the Republic, was occupied by the consuls and other chief officers when administering justice or presiding on great occasions. The lictors also, twelve of whom marched two by two before the consul with their rods and axes and did his bidding whether to flog or kill, were of Etruscan origin.

The last three kings were foreigners of Etruscan birth or associations. Two of them bore the name of Tarquin, which really was no name at all, but a royal title corresponding to the Pharaoh of Egypt or the Minos of Crete. They were clearly 'tyrants' of the same pattern as Periander, Peisistratus, and the rest <sup>1</sup> who held sway at that very time in Greece; and they won their position in like manner by courting the favour of the multitude in opposition to the unpopular nobles. But tyrannies were never long-lived. The second or third generation usually saw the end of them. The last Tarquin made his rule so insupportable that the Romans for ever afterwards hated with a blind hatred the very name of king (*rex*). Even Augustus had to disguise the nature of his authority by cloaking it in other forms.

But whatever the danger from Etruria might be, and whether the kings were of Etruscan origin or native, Rome was making steady progress all the time at the expense of the neighbouring 'cities,' Latin and Sabine. In quite early days Alba was conquered and destroyed, and those who dwelt in it, gods and all, were removed to Rome to live there on equal terms and become good Romans. Other 'cities'—they were really little more than villages—shared the fate of Alba. Of yet others the farmer-citizens accepted the position, and were content to see the market and the seat of justice removed to the

<sup>1</sup> See *Hellas the Forerunner*, vol i, chap v.

new capital. For as heir to Alba, Rome was now head of the Latin league, and from the first she knew how to win the good will of those whom she conquered.

The Roman armies in these early days and for centuries to come were a mere conscript militia of all free citizens, patrician and plebeian, rich and poor alike. Each summer while the crops were growing they turned out for some little local war. Every possessor of land was under obligation to serve as required from the seventeenth to the sixtieth year of his age. They were divided into different grades according to their age and the value of their landed property. Each man had to find, at his own cost, the arms and armour appropriate to his grade: the cavalry;<sup>1</sup> the heavy-armed foot of the first class with helmet, shield, greaves, and coat of mail, who fought in the first line; a second class, whose equipment was less complete; and so on down to a fifth class of slingers and the like who had no armour at all and whose position was in the rear. Below these classes came those who owned no land, the *proletarii*,<sup>2</sup> who went unarmed as workmen. Between the ages of sixteen and forty-seven all served in the field; the elders guarded the walls of the city.

Such was the organization of the army under the two last kings. And, of course, there was a census to number the people, assess their property, and assign them to their proper classes.

Political privileges and duties were distributed on much the same principle. The Senate of three hundred elders appointed by the king formed the royal council. With them on the death of the king rested the appointment of his successor. But that appointment was not complete until it had been confirmed by the Assembly of the citizens, whose sanction was also required to any change in the laws. As the popular body, the Assembly was courted by the Etruscan kings. Its members, however, voted by groups—there were thirty of these—and not

<sup>1</sup> The horses of the cavalry were provided by the State.

<sup>2</sup> The word means 'children-producers.'

as individuals; and as the groups composed of men of property were numerous, though the number of individuals in each group was small, while the poorer classes were crowded into a few groups, the men of property could always command a majority of the thirty votes.

Everybody knows the traditional story of the struggle of Tarquin and his house for the recovery of the city, for Macaulay told it in his inimitable manner in the *Lays of Ancient Rome*. That is how the Roman of later days liked to think things happened. The true story would probably be very different. It is plain that the war lasted for many years and that the issue was long in doubt. The rising power of Rome was checked, and before long it extended no further than the city wall. The Janiculum was stormed and the bridge-head carried by the Etruscan army under Lars Porsena the King of Clusium, and the city itself was only saved—if indeed it was saved—by the destruction of the bridge. Territory had to be surrendered as the price of peace. The people were disarmed by the victorious Etruscans, and were compelled to promise that from that day they would use iron for their ploughshares only. But such promises are never kept, and it is useless to extort them. Rome re-armed, and when the struggle was renewed the Etruscans, fortunately for her, had other business on their hands. In alliance with the Carthaginians they were threatening Greek Sicily, moving in concert with the Persians as a far-flung right wing of the host that was then descending upon Greece. Tradition had it that the Carthaginian army was overthrown by the Sicilian Greeks at Himera in 480 on the very day that the Persian fleet was disastrously defeated at Salamis. The shock to the prestige and power of Etruria was severe.

In the same years, to aggravate the difficulties of Rome, the Latins took a hand against her, for there was a strong party among them for the ex-king; and so great was the danger that, as was to happen many times in the years to come, the joint consuls who now divided between them

for a single year the supreme power, with the command of the army and the administration of justice, were superseded by the appointment of a dictator, who chose his own second-in-command, the master of the horse. It was no time for divided counsels, no time for the city to be governed or its armies led by colleagues each of whom was 'legally at liberty to interfere at any time in the province of the other.'<sup>1</sup> It was a time, too, when the city needed the best general it could find.

At last, in 496 B.C., after thirteen difficult years, Rome was victorious at the battle of Lake Regillus, famous in Macaulay's lay, and she could set about the recovery of her old pre-eminence. Within three years the first real forward step had been taken. Fortunately for her the Latin cities needed her support just as much as she needed theirs. If she had the Etruscan peril in the north, they were always suffering at the hands of raiding highlanders who swooped down upon their cattle from the mountains that lay south and east of them. Both parties would gain greatly by common action and steady support of each other.

And now we are no longer groping our way through the fog of legend which still hangs thick about the story of Lake Regillus with its saviour gods appearing at the crisis of the fight,

the Great Twin Brethren  
\* Who fought so well for Rome.

We are in presence at last of a document, one of the few that survived the burning of the city by the Gauls to be seen and copied centuries later. It records the treaty made between Rome and the Latin cities in the year 493 B.C.

'There shall be peace,' it runs, 'between the Romans and all the communities of the Latins, as long as heaven and earth endure; they shall not wage war with each other, nor call enemies into the land, nor grant passage to enemies: help shall be rendered by all in concert to

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. i, p. 247.

any community assailed, and whatever is won in joint warfare shall be equally distributed.' <sup>1</sup>

Rome and Latium were now one power in Italy, and their alliance was cemented by a common system of private law, the effect of which was that 'any citizen of a Latin city (including, of course, Rome) was to be able to buy and sell, to hold and inherit property, in any other city, in full confidence that he would be protected by the law of that city in so doing; and if he married a woman of another city his marriage was legitimate, and his children could inherit his property according to law.' <sup>2</sup>

The two parties to the confederacy were to contribute equal numbers to its army, and the equality of Latium was recognized in the provision—not less observed—that the command should be held by a Roman and a Latin in alternate years.

About the same time two other events of great significance occurred. First in 495 B.C., the year after the battle of Lake Regillus, the great Sabine families, the Claudii, that was to play so famous a part in Roman history for centuries to come, left its home country, the all its numerous dependants and settled in the city. Appius Claudius, its head, became a member of the urban tribe. And nine years later a hill tribe, the Hernici, uneasy between their powerful neighbours on either side of them, the Volsci to the south and the Aequi to the north, sought protection against them by joining the confederacy and was welcomed as a member. A breach had now been made in the hostile ring of mountains that lay about the cities of the plain. The advance up the valleys had begun: one day that would be the road to Samnium in the highlands beyond them.

But now at a moment when all seemed to promise well civil strife broke out to paralyse the arm of Rome. The plebeians had entered upon their long constitutional struggle with the patricians, and it has been written that 'if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.'

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. i, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Warde Fowler, *Rome*, p. 31.

## CHAPTER V

### A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF

INTERNAL discord had been put aside while the enemy was at the gate, but now the immediate danger was over and old quarrels flared up again. If the king's hand had been heavy on the people, patrician and plebeian had felt its weight alike; but now that he was gone the position of the plebeians had worsened. They had taken to themselves many oppressors in the place of one.

Latif, as Shakespeare in *Coriolanus*, following Plutarch closely, needed their grievances into a few shrewd sentences. The landers 'ne'er cared for us yet,' says an angry citizen in mouni to the friendly patrician, Menenius Agrippa, who would talk about the care the patricians have of them:

of each ne'er cared for us yet—suffer us to famish, and their And uses crammed with grain; make edicts for usury, to sup- fog of le, rers; repeal daily any wholesome act established against Lake, and provide more piercing statutes daily to chain up Lake, restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will; and where 's all the love they bear us.<sup>1</sup>

That was their point of view. The patricians, of course, saw the position with other eyes. The plebeians, the common people, were fickle, changeable. They were always wanting something different. No reliance could be placed on them.

With every minute you do change a mind;  
And call him noble that was now your hate,  
Him vile that was your garland.<sup>2</sup>

And Coriolanus could not forgive them for the mutinies in face of the enemy by which they tried to compel the patricians to give way:

<sup>1</sup> *Coriolanus*, I. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* I. i.

## A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF 31

Being pressed to the war,  
Even when the navel of the State was touched,  
They would not thread the gates. this kind of service  
Did not deserve corn gratis: being i' the war,  
Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they showed  
Most valour, spoke not for them <sup>1</sup>

It might well seem that two classes so sharply divided could never work together for Rome. But they did, for deep-rooted in the Roman character, as in our own, was a strain of solid common sense. They knew how to give and take, how to achieve a compromise between opposing points of view, and though the struggle was long and bitter it was fought out by constitutional methods. There was no bloodshed in the streets. Not for nearly four hundred years was that to be.

It was the gods who were the cause of most of the trouble.<sup>2</sup> They would be served—so it was believed only by their own children whom they knew, and on State business whether in peace or war was ever popular taken until the will of the gods had first been ascertained. It could be undertaken only by those who had the right to approach them. No plebeian, therefore, could hold office. And no plebeian could ever become patrician, not even if his mother were of a patrician house, for intermarriage between the two classes was rarely permitted, and the children of such a union were not recognized as legitimate. Patrician blood might not be contaminated: that too was the will of heaven.

Perhaps this political and social inequality, galling as it was, would not have provoked the long constitutional struggle if the grievance had not been aggravated by personal wrongs and much personal suffering. Most of the plebeians, whether small farmers or day-labourers, were very poor. All the land acquired by conquest belonged to the State and the Senate had the management of it; but the Senate showed gross favouritism in its management. The patrician could get what he wanted and did not pay what he should have paid for it: the plebeian had

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.* III. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Religion still, alas, divides



great difficulty in getting anything and was always squeezed. And, worse still, a greedy or unjust patrician landlord with the Senate behind him could often cheat the plebeian out of the little he had. Usury and debt gave him his opportunity. Times were bad. After the expulsion of Tarquin, the enemy had come right up to the walls of Rome, and the farmers, large and small, had suffered as farmers always suffer when their country is invaded. Taxation kept mounting, and the introduction of coined money about this time seems to have aggravated the distress. Men who had been used to deal direct by barter were no match for the new middle-man. The result was that many of the small men were hopelessly in debt, usually to patricians. And the law of debt was man's. If a man could not pay his creditors what he owes, the law allowed them, in the last resort, to put him in their grasp, and to divide up his body between them; and hence perhaps this dreadful penalty was seldom entered into. Many a debtor was sold with his children into alien slavery, and imprisonment for debt was common. When a campaign was on hand the debtor laws might be suspended, and the farmers crowded into the ranks of the army. But when peace was made the old laws were enforced, and the debtors came back to chains and slavery. This was intolerable. Fortunately there was an obvious remedy—a strike! So next time they returned from the summer campaign, instead of disbanding, they marched off in their ranks to the Sacred Mount some miles further up the Tiber and announced that they would found a new city there for themselves. It was a desperate venture, for what did they know about the forms of law and government, and how could they hope to fare without the protection of the gods? But the threat was enough. The Senate gave way. Reforms were promised, and they marched back again. There had been no bloodshed. This great event took place in 494 B.C. Twice again in later years the plebeians seceded from the city at periods of crisis and each time, of course, achieved their purpose.

The immediate result of the first secession was the institution of officers of their own, the famous tribunes of the plebs. Originally there were two, but the number ultimately grew to ten. They were chosen by the plebeian assembly which was organized by tribes or districts, four of which were city tribes and seventeen rural. The seventeen grew by degrees to thirty-one as the borders of the State widened. Each tribe had one vote, and its vote was determined by the majority of votes within it. The voting in the older popular assembly, which still survived side by side with the new one for certain purposes, had put all the power in the hands of the minority of well-to-do citizens.<sup>1</sup> The *Comitia Tributa*, the legislative assembly, which was hardly distinguishable from this early plebeian assembly, would one day confine itself no longer to the protection of the common people—its original purpose—but would pass laws binding on the whole State. Unfortunately, like so many popular assemblies, it became corrupt and disorderly. The voters were alternately bribed and bullied by great men who sought their votes for their own advancement, and the day of its usefulness was over.

The business of the tribunes was to be always at hand to protect the plebeians against the unjust or arbitrary action of the consuls; to see that as judges they did not give unjust decisions that bore hardly upon any of them, that taxes were wise and fair, and that money derived from them was used honestly for the good of the State. They could intervene with their *veto*<sup>2</sup> to stop the action of any magistrate, and they claimed the right to prosecute before their own plebeian assembly any great man who tried, like Coriolanus, to do them injury; and the assembly was already strong enough to force him into banishment.

It may be asked how officers who exercised duties so provocative escaped violence and even assassination. The answer is that a tribune's person was made sacred. He was put under the protection of the gods, and a curse was

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Veto* means 'I forbid.'

put upon any who might do him violence, so that he might go about his difficult business without let or hindrance. Yet to mark the fact that he was no officer of Rome, but only of the plebs, his seat on public occasions was not the curule chair, his toga had no purple border, and no attendants waited on him. Even in the Senate he had no seat (that came later), but might only sit on a bench at the door to listen to the business.

The appointment of the tribunes of the plebs was the first really effective measure for the protection of the humbler citizens against injustice and oppression. It is true that a law had been passed in 509 B.C., the very year of the banishment of Tarquin, which enacted that any citizen condemned to death or corporal punishment, who would previously have had the right of appeal to the king, should now be entitled to appeal to the Assembly of the whole people. It was the Habeas Corpus Act of Rome, and should have protected every citizen against an unjust patrician judge, but it was one of those 'wholesome acts established against the rich,' which the rich knew how to evade, and like Magna Carta itself it had to be enacted again and again in later years before evasion ceased.

The next forward step, and it was a long one, was to get the laws reduced to writing. No man could be sure of his rights while it rested with the consul alone to declare what the law was. The patricians, of course, resisted the reform, but at last (so the story says <sup>1</sup>) a commission was sent to Greece to inquire into the legal systems in force there. It came back and reported, and in 451 B.C. ten tables of law were published, graven on copper, to which two more were added in the following year. These were the famous Twelve Tables. They consisted in part of old custom, in part of new rules, and out of them grew the whole magnificent structure of Roman law, which in turn was to be a model for all the legal systems of the modern world.

<sup>1</sup> There is no confirmation of it from the Greek side.

## A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF 35

But the harsh laws against debtors still remained unaltered: there was no change in the land laws: and marriage between patrician and plebeian was still prohibited.

It is evident that the plebeians themselves were not united. There were always those who were attached to patrician houses, and who sided with their masters. But those who had no patrician sympathies were themselves divided. The poorer class, the landless men and day-labourers, did not feel much interest in political or social reforms. They knew that they could never rise to the consulship or wed patrician ladies. On the other hand, the wealthier plebeians who were interested in such matters were more likely to be lenders than borrowers, and took no interest in the reform of the oppressive law of debt which caused so much suffering to the small farmers, or in the land question which to the landless man was the most urgent question of all.

In 449 came a re-enactment and confirmation of the law of sixty years earlier, that Habeas Corpus Act of Rome just mentioned; and at the same time the resolutions of the plebeian assembly were declared to have the force of law, once the Senate had confirmed them, and to be binding on the whole State.

During the next four or five years advance was rapid. In 445 the humiliating restriction upon intermarriage was removed by the plebeian assembly with the Senate's consent. Henceforth, a marriage between patrician and plebeian was lawful and the children were legitimate. In the same year it was made possible for a plebeian to be appointed to the new office of military tribune which was to take the place of the consulship, but clearly the patricians never intended that anything should come of that concession, and for many years nothing did. It was just the same with the quaestorship. There were at that time four quaestors, financial officials, two of whom had the care of the city treasury and two were military paymasters. In 421 plebeians were made eligible for all four

appointments, but for years none secured election. The priests were determined opponents of the change. They were all patricians and they believed, no doubt quite honestly, that the gods would be angry if a plebeian should venture to approach them. And as the plebeians feared the gods none the less because they were the gods of the patricians—they might smite a plebeian in their wrath all the more for that—they did not dare to call in question the right of the patrician priests to interpret their will, which was supposed to be revealed by omens—the flight of birds and the flashes of the lightning. If the priests declared that the gods rejected a plebeian candidate upon whom the choice of the Assembly had fallen, then the election was void. The law allowed plebeians to be appointed, but the gods would not have that particular plebeian. Not till 409 did any plebeian secure election to the quaestorship, the lowest of the five great offices of State.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, an important part of the consul's duties was taken away from the military tribunes (who themselves disappeared before many years had passed except in the limited sphere of officers of the legions) and was handed over to two new officials, the censors, who were required to be patricians. They were appointed at intervals of five years and held office for eighteen months. Their chief duty was the taking of the census. It was also their charge to appoint and, if necessary, to degrade senators, to assign each citizen to his proper class for taxation, voting, and military service, and even to see that each head of a family performed his family duties towards wife and children and servants in a fitting way. They

<sup>1</sup> The five grades of curule officers were:

quaestor,  
aedile,  
praetor,  
consul,  
censor.

At a later date, when all offices were open to plebeian and patrician alike, a candidate for political honours was required as a rule to begin with the quaestorship and work his way upwards.

were men of years and repute who had already held the consulship, and against their decisions there was no appeal. Their power was great, but there is no sign that they abused it.

The last act of the censors' term of office was a religious ceremony, the purification of the whole people with prayer and sacrifice in the field of Mars outside the city as a protection against hostile or angry spirits. The numbering of the people always angered heaven. David, too, had to atone for the sin.<sup>1</sup>

It was about this time (438) that the life-and-death struggle with Veii began. War necessarily diverted attention from the constitutional struggle, but it increased poverty and added to the load of debt. In 440 and 439 B.C. there had been famine in the city, and when Spurius Maelius, a wealthy plebeian, came to the relief of the hungry citizens by selling them corn at a price so low that the patricians were shamed and angered, they raised the cry against him that he was trying to make himself king—a cry which 'always produced on the multitude in Rome an effect similar to that of the cry of "Pope" on the masses in England.'<sup>2</sup> The aged Cincinnatus who, so the story went, had been called from his plough twenty years before to save a Roman army that was blockaded by the Aequi on Mount Algidus, was now appointed dictator to deal with the emergency. Maelius was summoned before him and during a dispute was struck down by the master of the horse with his own hand, and no one raised a hand in his defence. His house was pulled down, and the corn in his granaries was distributed free to the people.

The same sort of thing happened again early in the next century when Marcus Manlius, who had saved the Capitol from the Gauls, came forward as a champion of the people. The sufferings of the poorer citizens had been greatly increased by the burning of the city and the looting of property, and many a farmer had lost his all. The oppressive debtor-laws were enforced again, and when

<sup>1</sup> 2 Samuel xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. 1, p. 291.

Manlius sold his land to enable him to help the debtors the same cry was raised against him. He was tried and condemned, and was hurled to death from the Tarpeian rock by the hands of the tribunes themselves.

After the disasters of the Gallic invasion, recovery was slow. All Rome's enemies chose the time of her weakness to throw themselves upon her, and there were many years of hard fighting during which the grievances of the plebeians were pushed into the background. At last, however, in 376 B.C., 133 years after the expulsion of Tarquin and the beginning of the long struggle, the two sections of the plebeian party, realizing at last that division had paralysed their efforts, united to push forward the whole programme of reform. Then at last there was good hope that the wealthy plebeian would get his consulship, the landless man his little holding, and the unhappy farmer relief from his load of debt. In this spirit, and with this end in view, Caius Licinius and Lucius Sextius, the tribunes of the plebs, put before the Assembly proposals of which the following were the most important:

(1) In future consuls and not military tribunes should be elected, and one of the consuls must always be a plebeian.

(2) One of the three great colleges of priests should be thrown open to the plebeians, who would then have their share in the interpretation of the omens.

(3) No citizens should be allowed to hold more than five hundred jugera<sup>1</sup> of the State land, or to turn out more than a hundred oxen and five hundred sheep on the common pasture. This law was intended to prevent the wealthy from monopolizing the land to the exclusion of the small man, but after the second Carthaginian war, when vast confiscations of territory enormously increased the area of the State lands, the old abuse crept back again and led to the fierce constitutional struggles which resulted in the murders of Tiberius and Caius Gracchus.

(4) All interest which had been paid on money lent

<sup>1</sup> About three hundred acres.

should be deducted from the original debt, and the balance remaining should be paid in three annual instalments. This would give the desired relief to the farmer class.

The patricians offered a determined opposition to these proposals. They tried to detach the poorer plebeians from those whose chief aim was political equality by undertaking to lighten the burden of debt and to set free the public lands, if only the demand for admission to the consulship and the college of priests were abandoned. But the landless men and the debtors had learnt their lesson. The bribe was refused: they let the patricians know that they would have all or nothing. Then success was certain. It cost further years of struggle to achieve it, but at last in 367 the Senate gave way. The proposals of Licinius and Sextius became law, and Lucius Sextius himself secured election as the first plebeian consul in the following year.

Absolute equality between the two orders had not yet been reached. The patricians could not endure to see the consul's judicial duties performed by a plebeian, so a new patrician magistrate, the praetor, was appointed to perform them. But it did not take long to sweep away the last remnants of patrician privilege. Within thirty years a plebeian censor and a plebeian praetor had been appointed; the plebeians had made their way into the two older colleges of priests—the Augurs and the Pontiffs; both consuls might now be plebeians; and the resolutions of the Assembly, its *plebiscita*, received the sanction of the Senate automatically and became law without further conflict or debate. The sun of the old nobility of birth was setting and a new nobility of office gradually took its place. From that were to spring the great senatorial families of later centuries, an aristocracy almost as exclusive as the old one.

At last Rome could devote her whole energy to the task of subduing the old enemies and rivals who gave constant trouble on her borders. But still there would be borders and still rivals and enemies beyond them. There could



be no peace. Rome must always attack or be attacked. One war, one conquest, always led to another, and the doors of the temple of Janus, which were only closed when there was peace, remained open from the end of Numa's reign in the eighth century B.C. until 235 B.C., when for three years they were closed, to remain open after that brief period of peace until Augustus closed them in 29 B.C.

## CHAPTER VI

### ADVANCE IN ITALY

THE history of Rome's earliest days is not always to be trusted. The first written histories were compiled by Greeks, and they invented freely. The siege of Troy lasted for ten years, so the siege of Veii must last for ten years, too. Three hundred Spartans fell at Thermopylae, and therefore three hundred Fabii were banded against Veii and lost their lives in an ambush to a man. The famous tale which Herodotus<sup>1</sup> had told of Thrasylbulus of Miletus was retold with minor variations of Tarquinius Superbus and his son Sextus. Some of the 'golden-deed stories,' as a recent writer calls them, which celebrated the heroism and devotion of the great families of Rome and inspired later generations to emulate them, were mere fiction. The skeletons of fact which underlay others had been given bodies of elaborate but imaginary detail. Yet 'even if not one of them ever happened they are true,' says the writer just referred to. 'They were Roman conceptions, and they embodied what Romans believed human beings should and could achieve.'<sup>2</sup>

Livy knew well enough what had happened. 'I believe,' he says, writing of the Samnite wars, 'that the true history has been falsified by funeral orations and lying inscriptions on the family busts, since each family appropriates to itself an imaginary record of noble deeds and official distinctions.'<sup>3</sup>

Through the whole of the fifth century this influence has been at work, and it did not cease then. The disasters to the Roman arms—and there are indications that they

<sup>1</sup> v. 92. See *Hellas the Forerunner*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Hamilton, *The Roman Way*, p. 201.

<sup>3</sup> Livy, book viii, c. 40; vol. ii, p. 157.

were numerous and severe—are slurred over: their victories are greatly magnified; small border-raids have grown into great wars. But if we cannot rely upon the details of the story its broad outlines stand out clear enough. We can see Rome as she was when the alliance with the Latin cities was concluded in 493 B.C., and we can see her again in 390 just before she was overwhelmed, for certain terrible and unforgettable months, by the Gauls. The difference between the one picture and the other is the measure of Rome's achievement in a century, and a century during which her arm was paralysed from time to time by civil strife.

In 493 her boundaries were those of Latium, and in Latium she was but the chief member of a league of cities and not their master. North-west, and divided from her only by the Tiber, lay Etruria; and on the left, the Roman, bank of the river, only five miles away upstream, was Fidenae, a little city half Latin, half Etruscan, which Veii used as an outpost against the upstart republic whose growing power threatened danger. Veii itself, the dominant city of southern Etruria, on its lofty and almost impregnable site among the hills, was only twelve miles away. It equalled Rome in population and in power, and far outshone it in wealth and culture and in the splendour of its buildings.

But, fortunately for Rome, Etruria was entangled in other quarrels to north and south. To the north she was already feeling the pressure of the Gauls who had occupied the valley of the Po, and southward in Campania, which she could only reach by sea (for Rome and the Latin territory now interposed a barrier by land where once she had crossed at will), she was fighting a losing battle first with the Greeks and later with their oppressors the Samnites.

Bordering on Etruria eastward was the Sabine country, but from that quarter Rome had less to fear. The southward movement that had brought Sabines and Samnites into Italy was still continuing, and Capua itself, the

wealthiest and most powerful of the Etruscan cities in Campania, was to fall in 424 to the Samnites.

Next, south of the Sabines, came the Aequi, rough mountaineers, dangerous, like all highlanders, in the rush of a border raid, but like all highlanders—it was to be so with the Samnites themselves—incapable of pushing home an advantage won and utterly devoid of statesmanship.

Between the Aequi and the Volsci, threatened from both sides, were the Hernici who had sought protection, as we have seen, in the Roman alliance, giving to Rome as much as they got from her.

Next, the Volsci held the sea-coast as well as the high ground south and south-east of Latium. These were no mere mountaineers: conquest was their aim, not loot. They were rivals of Rome and for some time it seemed that they might be more than a match for her. In 463 with the Aequi as allies they were almost at her gates, and in 446 the Aequi were there again. By the capture of Labicum in Latium the mountaineers had cut Rome's communications with the Hernici, and from Mount Algidus, a spur of the Alban hills, they were raiding far and wide in Latium.

In 449, however, patrician and plebeian laid aside their feud for a time. The tide turned and Rome advanced again. The Volsci were weakening under the attacks of the Samnites who were pushing their way up from Campania in the south, and the Aequian warriors seem to have been attracted southward by richer spoils to be won from the Greek cities there. At any rate, they left Mount Algidus in 418 and Rome and her Latin allies recaptured Labicum. As soon as she had cleared Latium of the enemy she established fortresses at strong points in the hills to cover it and to overawe the Volsci, and in 406 she drove right through their country to the sea, seizing and plundering the rich city of Anxur on the coast.

And now there were spoils to be divided. Rome had done most of the work and she claimed the lion's share, dealing with the Latins now as a master and no longer as

an equal. To their disgust she counted as "part of the spoil the Latin lands recovered from the enemy and took her share of them. It was sharp practice. For her injustice she had to pay the price. When the Gauls came the Latins failed her.

But this is anticipating. We must turn back to Veii—the most formidable enemy of all—Veii who would master Rome if Rome failed to master her. There could be no lasting peace between them. In 474 the Sicilians defeated the combined forces of Carthage and Etruria at Cumae, and no doubt it was under the shock of this defeat that Veii in that year concluded with Rome a peace for forty years. In 438, four years before the truce was due to expire, war broke out again and at last Rome took Fidenae. But the doom of Veii was not due yet. There was another truce, this time for twenty years, and when that had expired in 406 the final struggle began, to end ten years later in the capture of the great city by Camillus, who sacked it and carried off Juno, its goddess, to a new home in Rome. Veii was burnt to the ground, and its site has remained desolate ever since.

Great was the rejoicing at Rome over the utter destruction of the formidable rival of so many years. Echoes of that rejoicing can be heard far down the centuries when still, as a climax to the games, there would be a mock sale of the prisoners of Veii and mock booty would be put up to auction; while 'the most wretched old cripple who could be procured wound up the sport in a purple mantle and ornaments of gold as "King of the Veientes."<sup>1</sup>

On the fall of Veii other cities in southern Etruria made their peace with Rome. Falerii, famous in the tale of the treacherous schoolmaster and the generous conqueror Camillus, was one. And in 390, just before the Gauls appeared, Sutrium, one of the keys to northern Etruria, fell into Rome's hands. Then came her own great disaster, and many years had to pass before she would advance her boundaries again.

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. i, p. 329.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE COMING OF THE GAULS

TILL their disastrous overthrow at the battle of the Allia, and the occupation and burning of the city which followed it, the Romans had despised the Gauls as mere roving barbarians who could not hope to stand against their own disciplined soldiers. Fear of them they had none, and the arrogant contempt which led them to neglect all the usual military precautions was their undoing. After the disaster, the memory of it was to haunt them for centuries.

The Gauls were true children of the war-god. Fields and homesteads had no abiding charm for them. They would lounge the day through watching their herds of swine in the oak forests, but to drive a plough would disgrace a free warrior. The only property they valued was herds that they could drive, stuff that they could carry, and, above all, gold. They were always ready to march where the lure of booty called them. Fighting was their true occupation. Following that lure they had drifted in the course of the centuries from the borderland of the old empires in the highlands of Asia where the war-bands had their origin, and had by this time reached the country which took their name, and which in later centuries, when the Roman Empire was only a memory, would be known as France. They had crossed the Channel to Britain, which bears the name of one of the latest of their tribes to enter it, and had poured over the Pyrenees into Spain, overthrowing in both countries the rule of the old mining folk, the Iberians, and plundering their holy places.

Their first migration had streamed up the valley of the Danube past the Alps, and Italy had escaped, but now another movement had begun. Still more barbarous tribes were pushing up the Danube, and this time they

made their way through the Alps and poured down in a flood upon the valley of the Po to break the might of Etruria, sack Rome, and pass, raiding, right through the peninsula to the sea at Tarentum. A hundred years later their hordes descended through the Balkans upon Macedonia and Greece, plundered holy Delphi in 279 B.C., and crossed the Bosphorus to make a home in the heart of Asia Minor as the Galatians to whom Paul wrote.

Brave to a fault they were, but though intelligent, they were vain and ostentatious and very quarrelsome. They had artistic feeling and were clever workers in the metals, and like the peoples of Celtic blood to-day they were great talkers, eager and excited in debate. But they were unstable as water; there was no cohesion among them. As Herodotus sums up the Scythians, and Thucydides the peoples of Thrace, so the modern historian may epitomize the Celts: "If they could but agree among themselves nothing could withstand them."<sup>1</sup> But they could not agree. It was the same fatal disunion among the Celtic tribes that invited the Roman legions to Britain and the Norman knights to Ireland.

In 391 the Gauls were besieging Clusium (Chiusi) in the heart of Etruria when the Romans sent ambassadors to warn them off; and it was the haughty and contemptuous manner of those ambassadors and an act of reckless violence utterly out of keeping with their grave and privileged office that caused the Brennus to raise the siege and march on Rome. Camillus, the conqueror of Veii, was no longer there. He had been accused by the plebeians of enriching himself out of the plunder, and they had driven him into exile. The consuls of the year proved incompetent generals. When they met the Gauls by the little river Allia near its junction with the Tiber some nine miles away from Rome on July 16th, 390 B.C., a day accounted for ever afterwards ill-omened,<sup>2</sup> they

<sup>1</sup> Myres, *The Dawn of History*, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> Nobody, for instance, would ever marry or fight a battle or take any other important step on that day.

had provided no camp behind them, no cover for a possible retreat, so certain were they of an easy victory. But they had had no experience of the tactics or the desperate valour of the Gauls. Charging down in loose order, sword in hand, upon the slow, unwieldy Roman phalanx of that day, with its forest of spears projecting on all sides, the Gallic warriors shattered it at the first shock. It broke at once into a mob of fugitives who streamed across the Tiber to Veii, leaving Rome open and defenceless to the enemy. Fortunately the Gauls were slow to follow up their victory. They gave the Romans three invaluable days in which to organize the defence of the Capitol: then they marched in through the open gates of the city and sat down to starve out the little garrison. But they had no knowledge of siege-craft; provisions were hard to come by; and the climate was as deadly to them as it was to prove to the French and German invaders of a later day. So after seven months they withdrew with their loot, leaving the Romans to survey the ruin of the State. All round them allies and subjects were falling away, and it looked as though the work of conquest were all to do again.

Such was the desolation of the city that there was talk of removing altogether to Veii and making a new home there. Fortunately, the proposal was overruled, and the people set about rebuilding it without further delay. Camillus was recalled and made dictator, and 'the very first measures he introduced into the Senate were those relating to the immortal gods. He got the Senate to pass a resolution containing the following provisions: All the temples, so far as they had been in possession of the enemy, were to be restored and purified, and their boundaries marked out afresh.'<sup>1</sup>

There was no scientific planning of the city. Rome was not to be a city of rectangular blocks and parallel streets like all her later colonies. The building was hurried and haphazard, and the streets were so narrow and tortuous

<sup>1</sup> Livy, book v, c. 50; vol. i, p. 345.



that 'almost all portorage in the city had to be done by men with the aid of mules or donkeys,'<sup>1</sup> and Caesar, at a later day, had to forbid wagons to be driven through the streets in the day-time.

No sooner had the Gauls withdrawn than the Volsci and Aequi flew to arms. They entered the Roman territory, and the Latins were all sympathy. In the north the Etruscans rose and recovered Sutrium. The outlook was black; but Rome's central position was her salvation. Camillus, with the whole people for the moment solidly behind him, beat the invaders back. The territory of the Aequi was laid waste with fire and sword so thoroughly in 388 that they gave no more trouble for a century. Then the war was carried into Volscium, and in spite of the aid given by the Latin volunteers, the rebel towns were compelled to submit. The Etruscan rising in the north was firmly dealt with. Rome laid her hand upon the fertile territory of Veii. Here was an opportunity to satisfy the land-hunger of thousands of needy plebeians, so the country was covered with them and completely Romanized. In 387 four new rural tribes were added to the twenty-one existing tribes of Roman citizens. A few years later two strong military colonies were planted at Sutrium and Nepete, fortress cities at the gates of Etruria, to secure the new territory and open the way for further advance when the time should be ripe. These were 'Latin' colonies, and the soldiers, even if they had been born in Rome, would be full citizens no longer. They lost their votes, but they would have the valued rights of trade and intermarriage with the mother city which attached to the so-called Latin colonies, and there were the tempting allotments of conquered land. We shall witness the repeated foundation of such colonies, as well as of Roman colonies which enjoyed the full rights of citizenship.

Then the advance slowed down. The years 380-360 were difficult. The quarrel of patrician and plebeian had

<sup>1</sup> Warde Fowler, *Social Life at Rome*, p. 55

flared up again. The burden of debt was still the cause of trouble. It was not until the passing of the Licinian laws in 367 that it was at last removed.<sup>1</sup> To add to the troubles of the time the Gauls invaded the land repeatedly. The old Camillus, then dictator for the fifth time, fought them in 367 and won the last of his many victories. Two years later he died of the plague which attacked Rome periodically, just as for centuries it used to attack the old insanitary London. During the eighteen years that followed there were five more invasions. After the last had been repulsed in 349 the Gauls came no more for many years. Migration from beyond the Alps had ceased. But occupying the north of Italy as they did they were an ever-present danger. They were always ready to make common cause with Rome's enemies in the moments of her greatest peril.

<sup>1</sup> See pp 38 and 39, above.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ‘FORBEAR THE CONQUERED AND WAR DOWN THE PROUD’

TIMES had indeed been difficult since 380, but by 358 the way was clearer. At last Rome felt herself sufficiently secure in Volscium to occupy new ploughlands, and to enrol two more rural tribes in the conquered territory. In the same year the old Latin League was renewed, but Rome was no longer contented with an equal's part: her superiority was admitted. She had made a wonderful recovery since the disaster of 390.

Two years later trouble broke out again in southern Etruria. The cities were alarmed by the rapid Romanization of the country. Three of them, Tarquinii, Falerii, and Caere, fearing for their cherished independence, took up arms. Feeling was bitter and in the war that followed savage deeds were done on both sides.

‘When Falerii fell the Romans took a bloody vengeance. Of the prisoners, all those of noble birth, to the number of 358, were sent to Rome; the rest were put to the sword. Those who had been sent to Rome were all scourged and beheaded in the middle of the Forum.’<sup>1</sup>

Caere, nearest to Rome, was treated differently. Of old it had been friendly to the Romans, and it had given shelter to their gods after the defeat at the Allia, but now it lost its independence and had to surrender half its territory. It was the first enemy city to become a Roman *municipium* — an urban community enjoying the rights of local self-government, but in all other ways subject to Rome. Its inhabitants, though they were not included in the tribes of Rome and were not eligible for office or

<sup>1</sup> Livy, book vii, c. 19, vol. II, p. 75

entitled to vote in the Assembly, shared all the other rights of Roman citizenship—intermarriage, trade, rights of property and inheritance, and in general the protection of the law—and the day would come when the full rights of Roman citizens would be bestowed upon them. Many cities would afterwards receive these ‘Caerite Rights’ as Rome extended her sway over Italy and far beyond it. Her policy towards a beaten enemy was changing. Unless, like some Capua or Carthage, they had offended beyond forgiveness (for revolt was seldom pardoned), they would no more share the fate of the Veientes; no more be massacred or enslaved or removed in a body from their ancient homes. They became citizens or allies of Rome instead. Mercy to the conquered! It was a new idea, peculiarly Roman. It was not inspired by any sentiment of magnanimity towards a beaten foe—there was nothing gentle in the Roman—but by sheer hard sense. Rome at this time wanted ever more citizens, ever more soldiers, and what better way could there be of getting them? For the sons and grandsons of the new citizens would fight for Rome and take a Roman’s pride in the traditions and the great achievements of their city. In days to come the African, the Spaniard, the Gaul, the Briton would be Romans too.

With the rest of southern Etruria a peace was made for the usual forty years. The complete conquest of the country, north as well as south, had still to come.

Though the Latin League had been renewed in 358 the Latins were still uneasy. For many years the higher command of the army had been in Roman hands, and all the prizes of victory had gone to Rome. Though nominally still allies they were equals no longer. Volscium, south of them, had been conquered and was being gradually Romanized, and they saw that the day must come when they would be subjects, too, if they did not assert themselves before Rome became too strong. In 349 they challenged Rome by refusing their contingent to the army, but she was not ready for the struggle and let

the insult pass. That open revolt would follow before long was certain, but the longer it could be postponed the better, for there was trouble with Samnium ahead.

The first Samnite war broke out in 343, preluding a struggle which was to last for sixty years with short intervals of uneasy peace.

The Samnites were more formidable foes than any that Rome had yet met. They were Italians, too, but of the Sabellian family, less closely akin to the Romans than the Volsci and Aequi. In their own country high up among the Apennines behind Campania they lived the hardy lives of mountaineers, untouched by the softening influences of city life that had sapped the vigour of the Etruscans. At first they were probably even better soldiers than the Romans, who indeed learned many useful lessons from them, borrowing from them the heavy throwing javelin, the *pilum*, a weapon nearly seven feet long which at first partially, and in the end entirely, replaced the spear, and became the characteristic weapon of the legions in the centuries that followed.<sup>1</sup>

But whatever advantages the Samnites might have over the Romans in tactics and equipment, were more than counterbalanced by their lack of Rome's great administrative qualities, her unity of action, and wider political vision. What Rome conquered she secured and made her own. Strong points were fortified; military roads were built to facilitate the rapid movement of troops; colonies were introduced and the land thoroughly Romanized. She took no second step till the first held firm. And the whole Roman people acted as one under the direction of the Senate and the leadership of the consuls. Their strength was never dissipated by the independent action of different sections. With the Samnites it was far otherwise. There was no one dominant power among them, and no settled policy. As we have seen already,<sup>2</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> When the *pilum* had been thrown the soldier used his short, two-edged stabbing sword.

<sup>2</sup> p. 42, above.

migratory instinct was deeply rooted in them: they were always on the move. In this way they had overrun all southern Italy. Campania was theirs with its great city Capua, once Etruscan, the wealthiest and most luxurious city in Italy, second only to Rome itself in point of size—Capua, where the gladiators already fought at banquets for the entertainment of the guests. There were Samnite confederacies in Lucania and Bruttium, and the powerful city of Tarentum was already seeking aid against them from its Greek kinsmen overseas. But there was no common action, no cohesion between them. The stock was dispersed and divided. The Samnites of the poor rugged mountain homeland with its inaccessible defiles and the Samnites of the rich lowlands were not at one. The latter, settled among the Greek cities of Campania, had intermarried freely with their inhabitants, and had acquired their tastes and manners. They had no love for their cousins of the mountains, who in their eyes were boors; and the mountaineers in turn despised them as degenerates. At this very moment the armies of Samnium proper were deep in Campania, ravaging the country and threatening to settle there.

When Volscium had been thoroughly secured, only the river Liris, its southern boundary, separated the Romans from Campania, and the Campanians now appealed to them for help against their countrymen—a dangerous invitation, for where Rome once entered she was apt to stay. The invitation was accepted: the legions crossed the Liris in 343 and war followed. But it was a short war, for both parties were nervous lest other enemies should take them in the rear. The Greeks of Tarentum were threatening the Samnites, and Rome knew that the Latins were on the verge of revolt. Peace was therefore made in 341, and the late enemies divided the spoils of Campania between them. Rome now held Capua, and it was an unwilling and discontented subject.

Later in the same year the Latins rose, and they sent their two praetors to Rome to lay their demands before

the Senate. They claimed to be treated as equal partners in one common state with half of the Senate and one of the consuls Latins. If Rome would not consent, then let the old connection be dissolved, and they would go their own independent way. But Rome would not accept either alternative and made ready to fight. Capua, with the rest of Campania, seized the opportunity and rose with Latium: Volscium, seeing a last chance of recovering her freedom, rose too. The Roman army still in Campania found itself in a perilous position with its communications cut. Only a decisive victory could save it, but the victory was won. There was a desperate battle near Mount Vesuvius in which defeat was only averted—so the story ran—by the heroism of the plebeian consul Publius Decius Mus, who in solemn form devoted himself and the army of the enemy with him to the gods of the underworld, and then charged into the middle of the hostile ranks to meet his death. Another great victory followed: the towns, Latin and Volscian, that still held out were besieged and captured one by one, and by 338 the war was over. The Latins had fought and lost. There could be no more talk of equality or independence. The old Latin League dwindled into a mere association for religious purposes, and the cities found themselves, for all political purposes, bound no longer to each other as well as to Rome, but each individually to Rome alone. Most of them became *municipia* with 'Caerite Rights.' Latins could intermarry with Romans, trade with Romans, hold and inherit property in Rome; but no such community of interest was permitted between the several Latin cities. In every possible way they were separated from one another. *Divide<sup>1</sup> et impera*—divide to conquer—was a fundamental principle of Roman policy. There was no wreaking of vengeance on the conquered; no tribute was demanded—Rome in those days taxed not her subjects but herself; and there was no interference with the right of local self-government. Nothing was

<sup>1</sup> Three syllables. Accent as 'tidily.'

done to make life intolerable. Rome was content—would always be content—so long as the control of high policy was in her sole hands, the making of war and the making of treaties, and her subjects found soldiers for her armies. A very few of the cities retained an ampler measure of independence: they remained allies—it seemed a privilege as yet—each bound by a separate treaty to Rome. If any man thought that life in a provincial city did not offer scope enough to his ambition there was no need for him to make a grievance of it: he could always pack up and go to Rome like Appius Claudius the Sabine, and at the next census he would be enrolled in one of the tribes, urban or rural, and live thenceforth in the middle of the stream of life.<sup>1</sup>

There was some confiscation of territory and some judicious granting of special privileges and even pensions to the governing classes in the Campanian towns as the price of their good will. At points of danger colonies were planted as usual, particularly to guard the upper reaches of the river Liris, and the approaches to Samnium. The Romanization of the new territory was taken in hand, and in 332 more ploughlands were occupied and two more new tribes were enrolled. Rome was expanding. Like modern Italy she needed more room for her people.

But if Rome was merciful to the conquered she remained ruthless to a proud and stubborn foe:

Remember, Roman, thou  
To rule the nations as their master: these  
Thine arts shall be, to engraft the law of peace,  
Forbear the conquered, and war down the proud.<sup>2</sup>

The plain country had now been won, and the stage was set for the next great struggle. That would decide whether Roman or Samnite should be master of all Italy.

<sup>1</sup> This privilege was lost later. See below, p. 158

<sup>2</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi 851-33 (Rhoades)



## CHAPTER IX

### THE SECOND AND THIRD SAMNITE WARS

THE first Samnite war which broke out in 343 had been no real trial of strength. It was provoked, as we have seen, by a collision of interests in Campania, and it ended in an arrangement which left Capua to Rome and much of Campania with it. Perhaps the Samnites expected that the new territory would prove a source of weakness to Rome rather than of strength. When the Latins rose, it very nearly did. But they did not take advantage of the opportunity. With their usual flightiness and lack of foresight they turned their backs on Rome and took up other quarrels, after first, with incredible folly, making an enemy of Volscium, whose friendship they should have done everything possible to cultivate, by destroying Fregellae, a Volscian town on the Liris, seventy miles south-east of Rome. The wanton act so terrified the neighbouring Volscian towns that as the lesser evil they handed themselves over forthwith to Rome, as Capua had done before for the same reason. Then the Samnites turned away south and plunged into the troubled area of local feuds round Tarentum, intervening in the internal disputes of their kinsmen the Lucanians, and championing Lucania in her perpetual quarrel with that city. So Tarentum was alienated too.

While the Samnites had their backs to her and were busy with their futile raids far away in the south, Rome in her patient persistent way had subdued Latium and Volscium and organized her new territory in Campania, locking all doors that a hostile Samnium might try to force. The Samnites had destroyed Fregellae, the key to the passage of the Liris, and then dropped the prize: Rome, whose eyes

for a military position nothing escaped, quietly picked it up, introduced colonists and fortified the town. This was in 328.\* The treaty which ended the first war had left Teanum in the north of Campania to Samnium. Rome, recognizing it as a point of danger, and with an eye upon an uneasy discontented Capua as well, had planted a strong fortress-colony at Cales in the middle of the plain between the two in 334 to watch both. Worse still she had laid her hand on Sora, a Volscian town on the upper Liris which the treaty had left to Samnium, and had fortified that also. At the same time, by her wise treatment of the cities that she had lately gained, and by her prudent diplomatic intervention in the affairs of Samnium's neighbours, using their local differences to create wherever possible a party that would look to her, she had strengthened her position greatly by the time the Samnites, who had been so busy in the south and south-east, began to take serious notice of what was going on west and north-west of them. Then they discovered to their alarm that, whereas for their southern enterprises they had loot and perhaps glory, but no advantage more solid to their credit, and even fewer allies and more enemies than they had before, Rome for her work since the Latin war had ended had a girdle of fortresses that closed all ways of entry, and allies who would be glad to have her help in putting a stop to the never-ceasing Samnite raids. So strong had she become that it was doubtful whether an unaided Samnium could any longer shake her, and if that were so it could not be long before Samnium with all Italy would have to accept her as a master.

The Samnites now protested at the fortification of Fregellae and Cales and Sora; but it was too late. Rome would not dismantle and hand back fortresses. That was not her way. If they would preserve their independence it was high time to look round for allies who would help them to strip Rome of those formidable fortresses at all points of the compass that were becoming a threat to everybody.

There were two powers that were interested beyond all others, Etruria and Tarentum. Would Etruria move? There, it was true, Rome had friends among the aristocracies that held the reins of government in the several cities. But the mass of the people loved their governing class as little as they loved their Roman friends. Something might be done there. An early success might bring them into an alliance, and with them perhaps the Latins and the Volsci who were still sore; perhaps, too, the Hernici and the Umbrians and the other races of central Italy; even the Gauls might be persuaded to take a hand, though it was not well to trust them too much. But though Samnium held her own for years against her powerful adversary and in 321 won a resounding victory, the Etruscans still did not move.

Tarentum had suffered so much from the Samnites that it might be difficult to persuade her to make common cause with them against Rome. Nor would she be an ally on whom dependence could be placed for all her wealth and reputation. The people, of that Lacedaemonian stock which was once the hardiest and bravest in all Hellas, were famous for their manufactures and their commercial enterprise, and of all the Greek states in Italy they were the strongest. But wealth and easy living had undermined their ancient qualities, though the full measure of their decadence had not yet been exposed. By sea they were still to be feared. They had the finest harbour in Italy; their ships were known in all Greek waters; their seamen were second to none. Life was easy even for the poorer class, the fishermen, for fish were abundant in the gulf. It was these fishermen who manned the fleet in time of war, and they saw to it—for the democracy were supreme—that the ships, at least, were kept in a state of efficiency. But ships would not save Tarentum when the legions moved against her, and the fishermen were no soldiers. Indeed, the stern discipline that war demands of soldiers was little to the liking of any section of the Tarentines. They would always hire captains

and soldiers' to do their fighting for them if they could—only to find that hired captains were very apt to try to exchange the role of servant for that of master.

Nor was the independence of Italy to be saved by such a democracy as that which now governed Tarentum. It had in truth every fault that a democracy can well have. It was vain to expect wisdom in the deliberations of an Assembly so irresponsible that at any time 'a flourish of rhetoric or a broad joke might decide the policy of the State,'<sup>1</sup> or an unbending resolution of a people so sunk in 'frivolity and dissipation that Plato, who had visited Tarentum some sixty years earlier, recorded that he saw the whole city drunk at a great festival. It could only distress and alarm the wiser citizens to watch those raw heady amateurs playing at politics and diplomacy, dissipating their city's strength and wasting its resources, while at Rome, whose army they would surely have to face if they let Samnium be beaten, that matchless Senate, an 'Assembly of Kings,'<sup>2</sup> controlled each move, missing no opportunity that offered, never wasting men or money or one ounce of strength, and fulfilling every day in the true spirit of the Puritan the last letter of their obligations to their gods. And while the Roman was still thrifty and honest, the Greek of that day was extravagant and utterly untrustworthy. The Roman 'magistrate,' said the Greek Polybius,<sup>3</sup> 'would on his simple word of honour administer enormous sums, while in the case of the paltriest sum in Greece, ten letters were sealed and twenty witnesses were required, and yet everybody cheated.'

Of course, Tarentum was in a difficult position, but governments are to be judged by their handling of difficult positions, and only wise men can handle them successfully. A country whose first interest is commerce will always avoid war if it can. And the sea was Tarentum's

<sup>1</sup> Wells, *Short History of Rome*, p. 63

<sup>2</sup> So Cineas, the minister of Pyrrhus, described it.

<sup>3</sup> Writing in the second century B C

chosen sphere of activity. No doubt it seemed that the affairs of Sicily and Corcyra, Greek like herself, were more important to her than the quarrels of warlike peoples, such as the Romans and Samnites, 'barbarians' who counted for little in the way of commerce, and were strangers to all that was meant by art and literature and philosophy. And what had the Samnites ever done to help her? Their Lucanian kinsmen had always been a nuisance, even a danger, and whenever she turned at bay and gathered an army of mercenaries to chastise them, down would come a Samnite army to take their side. The ablest diplomacy might have found it difficult to reconcile Lucanian and Tarentine, separated as they were by centuries of deep hostility, especially while the Roman agents were busy fomenting every local quarrel. But the Tarentines did not try, and the Romans' task was all the easier. The mass of the Lucanian people might perhaps have been persuaded to follow Samnium's lead even to the point of acting with Tarentum, but their highland lords were too fond of raiding, of driving cattle and gathering loot, lightly to throw in their lot with the victims whom they had harried for centuries. And they had their way. So Rome concluded an alliance with Lucania, and that would keep Tarentum busy.

On the help of the Apulians Rome could count with confidence. Ancient enemies of all the Samnite race, they could but lean to her. And Luceria in Apulia was a key position which would presently be secured, and once it was fortified and linked by a good road with Rome the north of Italy would be severed from the south. Samnium would be isolated, enclosed between Rome and Latium on north and west and the Apulians and Greeks on south and east. But for all that Samnium was to put up such a fight as Rome assuredly had never looked for.

The outbreak of war was caused, as in 343, by a local collision. It so happened that the Romans were planning the subjection of the twin cities Palaeopolis and Neapolis (Old City and New City, the latter the future

Naples), which, alone of the Campanian cities within their sphere, had not submitted to them. Samnium learning of their intentions sent a force to Palaeopolis to hold it against them. Rome's reply was to declare war in 327, in name against Palaeopolis which was resisting her, but in fact against Samnium, and she proceeded to besiege the city. The Palaeopolitans had no mind to endure a long siege, for it crippled their trade, and they thoroughly disliked their Samnite garrison, of which by a stratagem they contrived to rid themselves in the following year. Then thankfully they delivered themselves into the hands of Rome, who, at any rate, would leave them to manufacture, to buy and sell, to import and export undisturbed, so long as they left war and diplomacy to her. Even the Samnite cities in Campania, Herculaneum and Pompeii among them, came over to her or were neutral, for they had little liking for their kinsmen of the highlands.

In that same year, 326, Rome let loose her army upon Samnium, and the long war was fairly launched. It was not to end till two-and-twenty years had passed, and still there was another war to follow.

Again the details of the fighting are for the most part obscure. The stories of it that passed into history, as Livy knew,<sup>1</sup> are not to be relied upon. During the first few years of the war it would seem, in spite of Roman statements to the contrary, that the Samnites held the upper hand. In 321 they inflicted upon their enemies an overwhelming defeat, the disgrace of which and the alarm it caused were burnt deep into the memory of Rome.

Luceria in Apulia was a vital link in the strategy of Rome. The Samnite general, Gavius Pontius, by means of spies persuaded the consuls to believe that he had gone off with all his forces to capture it, leaving Samnium bare of troops. With this bait he hoped to lure the Roman army into Samnium, for through the heart of that country lay the shortest and quickest road to Luceria.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 41.

What he had hoped for happened, and the Romans as they pressed forward through the dangerous pass of the Caudine Forks found the only exit securely held by the Samnites in force. There was no way out in that direction. They turned back, only to find when they reached the entrance that that was now blocked too. They were in a trap, and escape was impossible. They must either surrender or be cut down to a man.

The tale of what followed is in all the story-books; how the Samnites extracted from the consuls a treaty which they had no power to grant, and then let the Roman army go, after subjecting it to the intolerable disgrace of passing under the yoke; how the Senate repudiated the treaty but did not send back the army—and what people would have taken that quixotic course with the game so unexpectedly put into their hands again—how Samnium felt that it had been cheated, and Rome was always conscious that it had taken a mean advantage—not for the first time or for the last—how the beaten army was put into the field again and the war resumed.

After the battle of the Caudine Forks the Tarentines suddenly intervened. With an impudent assurance they sent envoys to both peoples to bid them lay down their arms. Surely, having given such an order, they would be resolute to enforce compliance! But no. The Samnites agreed to comply readily enough; but when Rome let it be known that she did not take orders from anybody and would rather fight Tarentum, too, than take them now from her, the Tarentine demagogues changed their minds. Fight Rome? Not they! They dropped the quarrel in a hurry and went off to Sicily instead.

As a result of their great victory the Samnites took Luceria. Fregellae, that hated fortress, fell to them too, not without the connivance of the native element in the population. Then the war languished. Rome was exhausted, Samnium fatally inactive. The Senate used the interval to push on with the organization of Campania and southern Latium, and in 318 two new tribes were added

in those regions. Then slowly but surely the relentless net began to tighten about Samnium once more. The lost fortresses were recaptured, and as a warning to would-be patriots of the risks they ran if they played Rome false, two hundred of the principal inhabitants of Fregellae, leaders of the national party, were carried off to the city and beheaded in the Forum.

Between 314 and 312 several new colonies were established. One, 2,500 strong, was sent out to hold Luceria; another went to Interamna, which stood on the old inland road between Rome and Capua, on the upper Liris below Fregellae; a third to Sinuessa to hold the coast road where it turned inland to meet the former road at Casilinum, three miles north of Capua. This coast route was now secured by the construction in 312 of the Appian Way, the work of the censor Appius Claudius, the first highway whose origin is preserved by Roman tradition. Thus early it 'strikes the note characteristic of Roman military roads by the directness of its course.'<sup>1</sup> Early in the following century it was extended to Beneventum, and later by Venusia (of which we shall hear presently) and Tarentum to Brundisium, whence all eastbound traffic would take its departure for Apollonia on the other side of the Adriatic.

And now, just as all was ready for the final attack on Samnium, a new enemy suddenly appeared. All northern and central Italy was taking alarm at last—when it was too late. They could see that the new fortresses and the road-making had more than the subjugation of Samnium in view. Rome was aiming at the mastery of all Italy, for there was no other way of protecting and preserving what she had already won. In 311, therefore, Etruria drew the sword and laid siege to Sutrium, which had long been in Roman hands.

Rome's northern frontier had always been dangerously close to the city. From the heights of the Janiculum, the Ciminian Forest was plainly visible stretching as a veil

<sup>1</sup> Stuart Jones, *Companion to Roman History*, p. 41.



Where northern Etruria, the strange land of which the Romans still knew so little. What peril might lurk behind that veil none knew, and being unknown it was exaggerated, even by the Roman Senate. 'The Ciminian Forest,' says Livy,<sup>1</sup> 'was in those days more frightful and impassable than the German forests were recently found to be; not a single trader had, up to that time, ventured through it.' And the Rome of Augustus knew only too well the perils of the German forests. One man, however, there was who would not be daunted by any bogey of the imagination. The consul, Quintus Fabius Rullianus, had won a great victory which relieved Sutrium and cleared southern (Roman) Etruria of the enemy, who withdrew through the Forest into their own country. In spite of the misgivings of the army, he resolved to follow them. The Senate, when they learnt his intention, forbade him to cross the frontier, fearing another Caudine Forks. But the message arrived too late. The army had already passed the Forest and had marched, pillaging, through a rich country that had been untouched by war for generations. All Etruria now flew to arms, but the consul won a decisive victory, and the Etruscans, who showed no spark of the grim Samnite tenacity, forthwith laid down their arms. The Umbrians, too, had risen, but they were caught and beaten by Fabius before they could join the Samnites. Once more Samnium stood alone.

But still the end was delayed, for now in 306 the Hernici and Aequi rose. It seemed as though Rome's enemies could never plan concerted action. Separately they rose and separately they were beaten. A single campaign reduced the Hernici, who now lost their old position of equal allies and became Roman citizens with 'Caeite Rights' instead. A part of their territory was confiscated, and a little later a new tribe was settled on it. Meanwhile, ignoring for the time the Aequi, the Romans again invaded Samnium; the last resistance was beaten down; the brave people abandoned the hopeless struggle and

<sup>1</sup> Book ix, c. 36; vol. ii, p. 204.

peace was concluded in 304. The terms offered were honourable; no cession of territory was demanded; their independence was respected. Rome had remembered 'to forbear the conquered.'

The peace, however, lasted only for six years. But Rome used the interval in characteristic fashion. The Aequi were punished, and two new tribes of Roman citizens were planted on lands that had been taken from them. Alba by the Fucine Lake, between the Aequi and the Marsi, was fortified and a colony of 6,000 men was sent to hold it, effectually parting the two peoples. A new road, later known as the Valerian Way, was driven southward through the territory that divided Etruria from Samnium, and guarded by colonies settled at Carsoli, once Marsian, and Volscian Sora. To complete the encirclement of Samnium and cover the valley of the Tiber on the east, another road, the future Flaminian Way, was carried northward to Narnia, which was taken from the Umbrians and strongly fortified in 299. The Samnites and Etruscans were for the moment powerless to prevent this further tightening of the net about them.

Tarentum, seeing at last what was coming to her, brought over from Greece Cleonymus, a Spartan, with 5,000 mercenaries, and herself put a large force of citizens in the field. But they gave no help to Samnium. Cleonymus had other views, and went off freebooting to Corcyra; and when at last he was persuaded to return in 302 to punish the Lucanians, the Romans came down and drove him off, and the Tarentines could only accept the favourable terms which Rome offered. She was not yet ready to fight for the mastery of the south. She had still to finish with the north where the position was full of danger. Etruria had not accepted her defeat as final, and the Gauls looked like making common cause with her. The indomitable Samnites seized the opportunity and in 298 once more took up arms. The decisive battle was fought in 295 against a combined army of Gauls and Samnites at Sentinum in Umbria on the eastern slopes of the

Apennines near the point where the Flamintan Way was presently to cross them. The Roman army was commanded by the consuls, Quintus Fabius Rullianus, the hero of the Etruscan war, and Publius Decius Mus, whose father had 'devoted' himself and fallen fighting at the battle of Mount Vesuvius<sup>1</sup> forty years before. At a critical moment in the battle the son followed his father's example, and again the act achieved its purpose. The Romans rallied, and the day was won. The Etruscans submitted, never seriously to trouble Rome again, and the Samnites were left once more to carry on the war alone until in 290 they abandoned the unequal struggle and sued for peace. Again favourable terms were granted, and they took their place with Etruria as allies of the Republic. But their hatred of Rome persisted. They were to help both Pyrrhus and Hannibal in their invasions, and they revolted yet again in the Social War of 90-88 B.C.

In 288 the Samnite Gavius Pontius, apparently the hero of the Caudine Forks, had been captured and put to death in a Roman prison. There was no room for any chivalrous feeling in the heart of Rome. She might show mercy to a conquered people because mercy paid, but there was never mercy for the individual patriot who thwarted her, however gallant or distinguished.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 54.

## CHAPTER X

### APPIUS CLAUDIUS AND THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

VICTORY found Rome worn and weary, and there was much poverty and suffering among the people, as always there must be after a long war. In 287 the old quarrel of the plebeians with a not very sympathetic or imaginative governing class flared up anew. Once more, and for the last time, they seceded to the Janiculum. As before, there was debt to relieve and land-hunger to satisfy, and both grievances were met by wise concessions. The plebeians demanded also that the resolutions passed by the Tribes in their Assembly should be binding as law for the whole people, and that demand too was conceded.

Already during the war Appius Claudius, a patrician of the bluest blood descended from Appius Claudius the Sabine, had made himself the champion of the popular demands. He wanted to improve the conditions of daily life, and he wanted also to make sweeping changes in the constitution which he thought would enable him to use the great ability of which he was conscious, and which he would certainly be prevented from using by the administrative system which restricted all the high officers of State to a single year of office—a system which the Senate jealously maintained because in it lay the secret of their power. officers came and went, they were permanent.

But Appius did not meet with the success which he expected. He asked too much. The family of the Claudii were characterized through all Roman history by impatience of the restraint of law and custom, by their contempt for the old religious obligations, and by a fierce turbulent temper and an overbearing haughtiness.

There was nothing of the slow, cautious, unimaginative Roman spirit in them. Popular they could never be, though repeatedly they took the people's side against their own order. The proposals of Appius were, indeed, revolutionary, and the Romans, like ourselves, always showed a good deal of reluctance to make sweeping changes in the constitution, the results of which could not be foreseen with any certainty. The people were quite ready to accept from him good water and good roads, but they were too shrewd to accept sweeping constitutional changes the main purpose of which obviously was to give him power.

At this time in Rome there was already a large and growing class of freedmen—emancipated slaves—many of whom had as little sympathy as Appius himself with the slow-thinking farmers rooted in their old Roman customs and queer religious scruples. They would be ready enough to support him in his attempt to change the constitution of the Senate and to increase the power of the city population, and with it their own. They might only vote in the four city tribes. When Appius Claudius was censor in 312 he removed this restriction and allowed them to register in any tribe they pleased. By introducing them into the twenty-seven rural tribes he secured adherents there who would, he hoped, be able to influence the opinions and the votes of those tribes in his favour. Their power would certainly be out of all proportion to their numbers, for most of them, whether rich or poor, lived in Rome and would always be there to vote; while the majority of the citizens were farmers scattered up and down Italy, and too busy to make the springtime journey to Rome to give their votes at the elections. And Rome never hit on the device, which our Plantagenet kings adopted, of bidding each community to elect representatives and send them to the capital to speak and vote on their behalf.

In the same year Appius Claudius attempted to alter the constitution of the Senate, which was composed

now exclusively of men who had held one of the great offices of State. The high officers, it is true, were elected annually by the Assembly, but as it was becoming increasingly difficult for anybody to secure election who did not belong to one of the great families, whether of patrician or plebeian origin, that constituted the new nobility, it was very rarely that any popular leaven entered the Senate. The government was really in the hands of a narrow oligarchy, and there, for the time, the shrewd Roman voter was content to leave it. For no change in a time-honoured constitution could well be less acceptable to so conservative a people than that which Appius Claudius attempted to make during his censorship. It was the censor's duty at the end of each period of five years to bring the Senate up to its full number of three hundred members, and Appius now introduced into it a number of his own adherents, most of them sons of freedmen whom nobody respected. And having done that he went on to defy the law which required the censors to lay down their office at the end of eighteen months. He wanted to remain in power. Finally, however, both he and his new senators were ejected, and at the next census the freedmen were struck off the lists of the rural tribes and restricted once more to the four city tribes.

Fortunately for Rome the champions of democracy were satisfied with such power as they could exercise through the Assembly and were content to leave the daily work of administration and the control of high policy to the great officers of State, whom year by year it elected, and to the Senate, who were familiar by long experience with each detail of the work. When at last it became manifest that Senatorial rule could no longer administer an empire with efficiency or keep peace at home, the people found a remedy—as in some countries they are finding it to-day—not in more voting and more talking, but in the personal government of a single individual.

The perils of the third century B.C., the terrible disasters

and the prolonged anxiety of the second Carthaginian war, confirmed the Senate in its authority. It governed. Elections and law-making were left to the Assembly, which, however, could only meet when summoned by one of the great officers, and could only vote on such business as he chose to bring before it. It enjoyed no right of political discussion. It merely accepted or rejected the laws presented to it. From time to time it was consulted as to the making of alliances and the declaration of war or the conclusion of peace, giving an answer 'yes' or 'no,' and acting usually as the presiding officer advised. The citizens could perhaps understand the purely municipal interests of the city, but the administration of an empire and the problems of diplomacy were beyond their scope.

With his great schemes for the improvement of social conditions Appius Claudius was more fortunate. He persuaded the thrifty farmers to spend public money on two great undertakings, both of which were costly and both of immense service to the city. One was the construction of the great highway that has already been mentioned: and the value of good roads is not only military, for roads foster trade and all the roads of Italy led to Rome. The other was the no less important provision of an abundance of good water for the populace, carried to a city by a great aqueduct to which, as to the road, a grateful people gave his name. He also did good service by making public the secrets of legal procedure, and the calendar of court-days which had been kept closely guarded by the priests.

Years later when old and blind and long withdrawn from State affairs he was to do his country one more incomparable service, and by a great speech—the first written oration recorded in Rome's annals—to inspire a wavering Senate at a moment of grave peril with the high spirit and vehement energy that neither age nor blindness had abated in him.

War-weary though Rome was as the long struggle with

Samnium drew towards an end, as soon as the battle of Sentinum in 295 brought final victory in sight she settled down as usual to the work of tidying up loose ends and making ready for the next task, now looming ahead—the struggle with Tarentum. That struggle could not be long delayed, though she was resolute to do nothing that would hasten its outbreak. If Tarentum would keep the peace, she would. The most important step of all by way of preparation was the foundation of the great fortress-colony of Venusia in 291 on the road between Tarentum and Samnium to separate the two. Twenty thousand men, an unprecedented number, were sent to hold it. So situated it was a point of immense strategic importance, for it held the southern extremity of the long line of road which, stretching from Narnia by Fre-gellae, parted the east of Italy from the west, as the road from Capua to Luceria separated north from south. And Venusia had this further merit, that Rome no longer needed the uncertain Lutanian alliance as a check upon Tarentum, and could afford to bid the Lucanians, much to their annoyance, keep their hands off the Greek city of Thurii which had just bought her protection by the surrender of its independence.

The trouble in the north, however, was not yet ended, and it offered the Tarentines an opportunity that they would have been wise to seize promptly, if ever they could be wise or prompt. But the extreme democratic party, foolish, and ignorant as ever, though they had made up their minds to commit the city to a war with Rome, frittered away the precious time in their slow negotiations with this possible ally and with that, and in haggling, as though they were dealers in the market rather than statesmen, over the terms—the money price—on which military aid was to be bought and sold. When first one tribe of the Gauls and then another rose in 284, not without the connivance of Etruria, Tarentum was still talking, still haggling. The Senones massacred the Roman envoy sent to negotiate, and defeated a Roman army. The



was enough to ensure their heavy punishment. They suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of a powerful force that was sent against them, and those who escaped the sword were driven out of Italy with what they could save of their flocks and herds, to disappear from history. Their neighbours, the Boii, were also heavily defeated, and were glad to make peace. There was no further trouble with the Gauls for nearly fifty years.

Rome occupied a tract of the Senonian territory along the Adriatic coast, and in 283 sent a colony with the full rights of Roman citizenship—for it was a post of danger—to occupy the seaport of Sena, which had been the capital of the tribe.

In the following year a small Roman squadron of ten ships for the first time sailed for the Adriatic, and on the way, neither intending nor expecting hostile action, entered the harbour of Tarentum, still in form a friendly city.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE WAR WITH PYRRHUS

It was only forty years since Alexander had died at Babylon on June 11th, 323, master of the East, at the age of thirty-two. All the world was still ringing with his fame, and it was the dream of every soldier that one day he too might emulate those mighty deeds. And there was one living in whom such a dream was not presumptuous. Pyrrhus, the high-spirited, chivalrous, and noble-hearted King of Epirus, was now in his thirty-eighth year. A descendant, so it was said, of Achilles and a kinsman of Alexander himself, he had been brought up among the Macedonian generals, and was already known for the first soldier of his day. What Alexander had done in Asia eastward he would do westward in the south. Alexander had led his army into Asia Minor to the coast, where Greek cities from the Persian king, who had been their master since Athens fell seventy years before; and when that was done he had marched to Egypt and then to the far-away Indus. He, Pyrrhus, would cross the Ionian Sea to deliver the Greek cities of Italy and Sicily from Rome and Carthage, their barbarian<sup>1</sup> oppressors, at that moment in uneasy alliance against them. Gratefully those cities would take him for their sovereign. Rome and all Italy should serve him; and he would pass on from Sicily to Africa, and make himself lord of Carthage and her coasts, and then return east to tumble the effete successors of Alexander from their thrones, reunite the dismembered empire and take his place as master of the world.

Such were his dreams. But though at one time his hopes were high he could not hold as king what he won as

<sup>1</sup> All foreigners were 'barbarians' to a Greek.

soldier. The Roman way of dealing with subject states was superior to his. And he had underestimated the character and military qualities of the Roman soldiers. He knew that they were not professional soldiers like his own men, that they were really a militia, farmers by occupation and soldiers only for the occasion in answer to the call of need—though need called long and often: but he did not know their invincible courage and their unmatched genius for war.

To this ambitious king, as he dreamed his high dreams and sat watching for an opportunity to give them substance, came envoys from Tarentum with the very invitation that he wanted. The Tarentines had given mortal offence to Rome, and they now asked him to come and protect them against the consequences. To them he was just such another military adventurer as they had known before, a hired captain paid to do their fighting for them. They little thought that they were giving themselves a master who would force swords into their own hands and make them fight for him.

From the theatre where they were assembled in their thousands, on a summer afternoon in 282 the Tarentines had seen that little Roman squadron of ten ships sailing peacefully towards their city. An old treaty which the Romans believed obsolete had forbidden Roman ships of war to pass the Lacinian promontory, the western extremity of the Bay of Tarentum, and an excited demagogue leaped up and in a fiery speech called upon the people then and there to take vengeance upon these invaders of their own home waters. The fishermen rushed down to the sea, manned their war-ships, and without any warning launched their attack. The Romans had no chance at all against their superior numbers. Four of their ships were sunk and one was taken: the rest escaped by flight. The admiral fell fighting. The prisoners were either executed or sold into slavery. Elated by their easy victory the Tarentines next attacked Thurii, which had put itself in Roman hands and received

a Roman garrison, deserting, so they said, the cause of their fellow Greeks. They took the city and plundered it and sent away the Roman garrison, which had perforce capitulated.

These were acts of supreme folly—the acts of an irresponsible excited mob; but they were followed by other acts as foolish, after ample time for reflection and in defiance of the advice of the wiser and more thoughtful citizens, who unfortunately, when the mere numbering of heads alone determined what action should be taken, were usually outvoted.

When the news reached Rome a large party in the Senate was for immediate war. But it was not the Roman way to decide large questions in a hurry, and the people were weary of war. Counsels of moderation prevailed, and it was decided to give the Tarentines an opportunity to make amends for the outrages they had committed. Let them release the prisoners, give back Thurii, and surrender the demagogues who had led the mob in the attack upon the ships, and south Italy would be satisfied. An embassy was sent to these demands before the Tarentine Assembly, where the people once more gathered in the theatre celebrating a festival, and they were brought at once into their presence. Lucius Postumius, who led the embassy, was told to deliver his message, but the people, excited by wine and revelry, would give him no fair hearing. They mocked at his faulty Greek, and when some drunken buffoon came up to him and filthily defiled his white toga, they laughed and cheered. Then Postumius, who up to this time had controlled his temper, allowed his indignation to master him, and he told the unmannerly citizens that his toga should go foul till he could wash it in their blood.

But still the Senate were anxious to avert a war if it were at all possible, and they knew that the aristocratic party in Tarentum had the same desire. One of the consuls was sent with an army into Tarentine territory,

but he behaved with great moderation and did all that he could to encourage the peace party. When the city militia marched out to fight he easily defeated them, and then, courteously and without ransom releasing the principal prisoners he had taken, he offered peace on the same conditions as before. For a short time it seemed that the moderates would gain control and accept the offer, but then an embassy that had been sent to invite Pyrrhus to come over returned from Epirus with his acceptance of the invitation. His terms, it is true, were not what the Tarentines would have liked, but those who had been responsible for the attack on the fleet had no wish to be handed over to Roman vengeance, and they did all they could to persuade the people to accept them. At first they seemed likely to fail, for the people were now hesitating to commit themselves to war. Then, just as the decision was in the balance, in the autumn of 281, three thousand Epirotes arrived under Milo, one of Pyrrhus's generals, to garrison the citadel, and the enthusiasm with which they were received swept caution aside and carried the democratic party back to power. The king, who was expected and the populace, a-tiptoe with excitement, broke out into wild rejoicing. But the older and wiser heads knew too well the folly of the venture. Tarentum would get a master in either event, but the Epirote king was like to be the more exacting of the two. 'Dance and sing while you may,' they said, 'for when Pyrrhus comes there will be something else to do.' And, indeed, it would be so, for Pyrrhus had no intention of letting them sit still and watch him fight their battles for them. As soon as he arrived at the beginning of 280 he called out all able-bodied citizens to serve in person in the ranks. They had indeed obtained from him a vague promise that he would remain in Italy no longer than was necessary, but who was to be the judge of what necessity required? The king did not intend that the decision should rest with them.

And there was going to be a fatal difference of aim.

The Tarentines wanted only to be delivered out of the hands of Rome: Pyrrhus intended if he could to create an empire with Tarentum for its first-fruits and seat himself upon its throne.

The call to service caused murmuring at once. The Tarentines had understood that they would have to pay the expenses of the war, but it was no part of the bargain that they should endure discipline and risk their lives. Pyrrhus, however, did not stay to argue. There was to be death for those who disobeyed. The peace party were quickly justified. Song and dance were over, indeed. The daily drill on the parade ground took their place. Tarentum was treated as a conquered city; soldiers were quartered on the citizens; the theatre was closed; clubs were forbidden to meet; Epirote guards were stationed at the gates. Those who gave trouble were executed, and a number of the leading citizens were seized and sent across the sea to be held as hostages.

One consul was at Venusia to keep the Samnites in check: the other was marching down south towards Tarentum, while Pyrrhus moved along the coast to meet him. The king came in sight of the Romans where they were encamped by the little river Siris, near Heraclea, and he was quick to mark the soldierly precision of their lines. Then first he began to realize something of the measure of his task. 'In war, at least,' he said as he surveyed the scene, 'these barbarians are not barbarians at all.'

When the battle began the Epirotes were drawn up in the close order of the phalanx with its ranks sixteen deep, man touching man, and a thick forest of long spears projecting on every side: the Romans were in open order, line by line, the men a yard apart, armed each with his two heavy javelins and short stabbing sword. The legionaries threw themselves with the utmost courage upon the spears of the phalanx, and a doubtful battle raged till Pyrrhus brought up his twenty elephants. The Romans had never seen the strange beasts before: their

very name was unknown to them: 'Lucanian oxen,' they called them.

Those curst Lucanian oxen, hideous,  
The serpent-headed, with turrets on their bulks.<sup>1</sup>

As the elephants advanced the horses of the cavalry took fright and threw the legions into disorder. Pyrrhus launched his own cavalry against them and the Romans were beaten. Seven thousand Roman dead lay on the field, all with their wounds in front, but four thousand of the Epirote veterans lay with them, and they were irreplaceable—a Pyrrhic victory. It is said that when the king rode over the battlefield next day and saw the Roman dead the sight wrung from him the tribute: 'If these were my soldiers, or I were their general, we should conquer the world.'

That the Greek cities throughout the south now came over to him was but poor compensation for his losses. They would give him no soldiers he could trust. He tried to tempt the Roman and Latin prisoners to take service with him, but not one came forward. Unless all his hopes were to go to wreck he must persuade the Romans with a fair offer of peace to stand aside, while he went on to Sicily and thence to Africa. To open negotiations he sent his minister, Cineas, to Rome, a man so eloquent and persuasive that Pyrrhus used to say that the tongue of Cineas had won him more than his own sword. For a moment the Senate wavered. Rome had been sorely tried by the long Samnite wars, and now another desperate war lay before her against a professional army, led by the world's ablest general. Could even Roman endurance survive the new attack? Then at the crisis of the debate there appeared an unexpected champion to support those who still counselled resistance to the last. It was Appius Claudius, once the enemy of Senatorial privilege, now old and blind, a partisan no longer. Hearing that the Senate wavered he had himself carried to the

<sup>1</sup> Lucretius.

Senate House, and once more addressed his fellow Senators. It was easy to show that the surrender they contemplated would earn for Rome the contempt of all her enemies, and would provoke from her subjects demands that would have no end. His speech convinced the waverers and Cineas was sent away with the proud answer that Rome never negotiated while there were foreign troops on Italian soil.

After Heraclea Pyrrhus moved north, the beaten army following him warily; but though he surprised Fregellae and forced his way into Latium, and even advanced to within forty miles of Rome, he achieved nothing. The Latin towns stoutly shut their gates against him, and no ally of any note dared break away. When a second Roman army came down towards him from the north he was compelled to retreat, and as winter came on he withdrew to quarters in Tarentum, while the legions that had been defeated at Heraclea wintered, by order of the Senate, under tents as a punishment.

In the spring of 279 there was another great battle, at Ausculum in Apulia, and once more the Romans were defeated, but again the Epirote losses were severe. By this time Pyrrhus knew that he could not hope to win. Fortunately the Sicilian Greeks gave him an opportunity of escaping from his impossible position. They offered him their sovereignty if he would come over and lead them against the Carthaginians. He accepted the offer and crossed to Syracuse early in 278, ignoring the protests of his Italian allies, now left to face an angry Rome alone. Milo and his garrison still held Tarentum.

At last the king was brilliantly successful, and before long the Carthaginians had been driven to their last stronghold, Lilybaeum.<sup>1</sup> But the enthusiasm of the Sicilians quickly waned. Pyrrhus had offended them in the exercise of his royal powers. Rome was always content to allow even conquered cities to manage their own internal affairs. And these were no conquered cities

<sup>1</sup> The modern Marsala.



but his own subjects who had given him a crown: yet Pyrrhus would allow them no such liberty. He imposed governors and garrisons upon them, appointed his own judges, and dealt out sentences of confiscation, banishment, and death in the arbitrary fashion of a tyrant. The Sicilians, fickle at best and, like the Tarentines, unwilling soldiers, began to feel that, if yoke they must bear, the Carthaginian yoke would be the lighter of the two, and they opened negotiations with their late enemies at Lilybaeum. Once more Pyrrhus found himself cheated of his hopes, and late in 276 he was back again at Tarentum. In the following spring he met the consul Manius Curius Dentatus near Beneventum. A night attack went wrong, and he suffered a disastrous defeat. He withdrew to Tarentum and from there to Greece, leaving Milo behind with his garrison to hold the citadel. All his plans had gone awry. He drifted from one adventure to another, and in 272 he met his end fighting in the streets of Argos, struck on the head by a tile thrown from a roof by a woman's hand.

Meanwhile Rome had resumed the old task of tidying up. New colonies were founded, among them Beneventum to hold Samnium in check, and Ariminum<sup>1</sup> north of the Adriatic and Castrum Novum, further south, as outposts against the Gauls. Preparations were made for carrying the Appian Way forward from Venusia to Tarentum and thence to Brundisium,<sup>2</sup> which, as soon as Tarentum had been secured, would be colonized and held as the port of passage across the Adriatic, a rival and successor to that city. Rhegium, too, which had been lost, was at last recaptured. It had been held since the battle of Heraclea by a body of Campanian mutineers who, having sinned against both sides, had successfully defied them both. They had mutinied against Rome, and as they had obtained possession of the town by murdering the Greek citizens upon whom they were quartered, Pyrrhus would have no dealings with them. Now their

<sup>1</sup> Now Rimini.

<sup>2</sup> Now Brindisi.

time had come for punishment, and the survivors were taken to Rome to suffer scourging and execution that allied troops might learn the risks of mutiny and treason.

Milo held Tarentum till Pyrrhus died. Both Rome and Carthage had greedy eyes upon it. For the moment they were allies, compelled by their common fear of Pyrrhus, but neither trusted the other. The aim of Carthage was to keep him at all costs out of Sicily: the Romans did not care where he went so only that he left Italy. After the king's death a Carthaginian fleet entered the harbour of Tarentum and the citizens, eager to be rid of Milo, entered into negotiations with the admiral; but Milo, if he must give up his charge, preferred to hand it over to the Romans, and did so; and the Carthaginians sailed away, excusing their action to their allies by the pretence—which deceived nobody—that they had only intervened with the kindly purpose of assisting them.

Both Rome and Carthage coveted the possession of the Greek cities, of fertile wealthy Sicily above all; and it was now only a question of time and opportunity when the inevitable struggle between them would begin. Pyrrhus had foreseen it. 'How fair a battlefield,' he had said regretfully, as he sailed away for home—'How fair a battlefield we are leaving in Sicily for the Romans and Carthaginians!'

The Senate treated Tarentum with all their old wisdom—a wisdom that Pyrrhus had failed to show. The city enjoyed again the management of its own affairs. Arms and ships, of course, were given up and walls had to be pulled down. But there was no vengeance taken—this time. Another time it might be different.

By 270 all Italy was quiet save only where the Samnites, obstinate to the end, fought on with the courage of despair. In the following year both consuls were sent against them to beat them to their knees, and 'the sword and the gibbet at length carried quiet even into the mountains of Samnium.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol i, p. 408.

## CHAPTER XII

### EDUCATION, MANNERS, CUSTOMS

THE purpose of the *Aeneid* of Virgil, himself a farmer's son from Mantua in Cisalpine Gaul, was, it has been said, 'to recall the degenerate Roman of that day to the sense of duty in the home and in the State.'<sup>1</sup> In the passage which follows, the poet, for an example and an inspiration, paints the picture of an earlier day when life was simple and sincere, and men knew their duty and did it. This, as he read history, is what the Roman once was, what he would have him be again.

Hardy and of a hardy stock,  
Down to the river our very babes we bring,  
And brace them with the water's cruel cold.  
Our boys hunt tireless, and wear out the woods,  
Their sport to rein the steed, stretch staff on bow.  
Patient of toil, to need inured, our youth  
Tame earth with mattocks, or shake towns with war.  
No age of life but with hard steel is worn;  
With spear reversed our bullocks' flanks we goad;  
Nor sluggish eld doth our hearts' strength impair,  
Or warp our vigour: on white locks we press  
The helmet-rim, and evermore delight  
To mass new plunder and by rapine live.<sup>2</sup>

But this is poetry—the *Aeneid* is one of the world's greatest poems—and it may be asked whether Virgil, writing late in the first century B.C., did not give rein to his imagination when he thus described the training and habits of the Roman in the great days that were gone. The question is natural; but these are no dream-children, no heroes of romance. Virgil's description is authentic to the last letter. That strong hardy race had ploughed as well as they fought; had lived contented with plain

<sup>1</sup> Warde Fowler, *Rome*, p. 10

<sup>2</sup> *Aeneid*, ix 603-13 (Rhoades).

country fare—'a breakfast that never saw the fire'; had found their amusement in simple village sports; had yielded to parents the dutiful submission prescribed by custom, observed scrupulously with unquestioning faith all the ritual that the gods required, and served the State with a selfless devotion that has never been surpassed. Hear Plutarch's account, taken straight from the writings of old Cato the Censor, most prosaic of men, of the education that he gave to his own boy at the beginning of the second century B.C. Cato took the greatest care of his son's training. He would not leave it as did so many men of his day to a Greek slave, though he had one who was a first-rate schoolmaster and who earned money for his owner by teaching the children of other people. He saw to it himself. 'Nor,' says Plutarch,<sup>1</sup> 'did he only show him, too, how to throw a dart, to fight in armour, and to ride, but to box also, and to endure both heat and cold, and to swim over the most rapid and rough rivers. He says, likewise, that he wrote histories, in large characters, with his own hand, that so his son, without stirring out of the house, might learn to know about his countrymen and forefathers.'

The Roman of the third century was not illiterate. Even among the lower classes and the slaves some kind of elementary education had made progress. Numbers of them, it is plain, could read and write and count. Many of their social superiors had not advanced much further. There cannot be culture without a literature and there was no Latin literature as yet. There was very little reading matter available. The earliest Latin books were the compositions of Greek schoolmasters from the south, crude translations from the Greek. Such a one was Lucius Livius Andronicus, who came to Rome as a little slave-boy<sup>2</sup> in 272 with other captives from Tarentum. He taught both Latin and Greek and produced a Latin translation of the *Odyssey* to be his school-book.

<sup>1</sup> *Lives*, vol. 1, p. 534

<sup>2</sup> He was freed and became a Roman citizen later.

For that purpose it remained in use for centuries. But it was poor stuff.

Andronicus was still alive in 207 and produced in that year, like a poet-laureate to order, a thanksgiving chant to celebrate the 'crowning mercy' of the battle of the Metaurus. He was a versatile person, for he was also an actor and playwright—the first Latin playwright. In 240 he produced the first play that was put upon the Roman stage, also a translation from the Greek. But a playwright had small honour. He worked for hire in a society in which custom forbade any one with any pretensions to gentility to receive remuneration for his services. Neither the consuls nor the governors of the provinces that were soon to come into being received any salary, though as the old code of honour began to lose its validity, the governors learnt all too quickly how to use, during their year of office, their many opportunities of gathering illicit wealth.

Cato, who died in 149 B.C., was a boy of sixteen or seventeen when Hannibal entered Italy in 218 B.C.; so he was born into the old Italy covered with little farms, and he died in the new when agriculture had been ruined; partly by the devastation caused by the long war, and partly by the fatal policy of feeding Rome with corn imported by the State from Sicily and Egypt and distributed below cost price and finally free, a dole—ruined so completely that land which had once supported a hundred small-holders with their families, now knew the plough no longer, and was worked as a cattle ranch by fifty slaves, mostly unmarried, under a bailiff slave-master, the only freeman on it. The loss to Rome was irreparable, for those strong men bred in the fields were the best citizens and soldiers she would ever have.

Cato was of farmer stock himself, and was brought up on a farm in the Sabine country which he dug and planted with his own hands. He modelled his way of life upon that of the old farmer-general Manius Curius Dentatus who brought the third Samnite war to an end, and after-

wards defeated Pyrrhus at Beneventum. The little cottage that had been his was near Cato's own farm. 'So that often going thither, and contemplating the small compass of the place, and the plainness of the dwelling, he formed an idea of the mind of the person, who, being one of the greatest of the Romans, and having subdued the most warlike nations, nay, had driven Pyrrhus out of Italy, now, after three triumphs, was contented to dig in so small a piece of ground, and live in such a cottage. Here it was that the ambassadors of the Samnites, finding him boiling turnips in the chimney corner, offered him a present of gold; but he sent them away with this saying: that he, who was content with such a supper, had no need of gold; and that he thought it more honourable to conquer those who possessed the gold, than to possess the gold itself.' <sup>1</sup>

So severely economical was he that he would even sell old slaves who had given him a life's service, because he would have no useless servants fed in the house: which shocked the kindly Plutarch as it shocks us. 'As to myself,' he said, <sup>2</sup> 'I would not so much as sell my draught ox on account of his age, much less for a small piece of money sell a poor old man.' But the Romans were hard men and Cato was one of the hardest.

At the age of seventeen he took his place in the army to fight against Hannibal. There, like Socrates at Delium, he showed that he knew what could be done by a bold face and threatening voice, 'justly thinking himself and telling others that such a rugged kind of behaviour sometimes terrifies the enemy more than the sword itself.' <sup>3</sup>

He mastered the law—every Roman boy knew the Twelve Tables by heart in those days as an earlier generation in our own country knew the catechism of its churches—and sedulously practised himself in public speaking; and he was always ready to take up a case in the law courts—of course, without a fee. His great ability was early

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. i, p. 517.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, vol. i, p. 521.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, vol. i, p. 517.

recognized by an influential neighbour, who persuaded him to go to Rome and take his part in State affairs, and he rose through all the great offices, finally reaching the censorship, his administration of which won him such general approval that his statue was put up with an inscription recording that 'this was Cato the Censor, who by his good discipline and temperate ordinances, reclaimed the Roman commonwealth when it was declining and sinking down into vice.'<sup>1</sup>

Though the old high standard of public and private life was steadily declining there were still many who modelled their lives upon it even after Cato's day. Cato was a 'new man' of humble origin. The great Lucius Aemilius Paullus, his younger contemporary, who in 167 B.C. won the decisive battle of Pydna which established the Romans in Macedonia, was a member of one of the old patrician families, but in his way of life he was as scrupulous and exact as, and not much less simple and severe than Cato. Though at that time he could have amassed great wealth as a victorious general he would take nothing and remained always a poor man. In Macedonia, 'he would not so much as see those great quantities of silver and gold, which were heaped together out of the king's palaces, but delivered them to the quaestors, to be put into the public treasury.'<sup>2</sup> His sons, who were studious and lovers of Greek literature like himself, might take the king's books but no more.

One of his daughters was married to Cato's son. For his other son-in-law Aemilius chose—for Roman marriages were matters of family arrangement—Aelius Tubero, 'a most worthy man, and the one Roman who best succeeded in combining liberal habits with poverty. For there were sixteen near relations, all of them of the family of the Aelii, possessed of but one farm, which sufficed them all, whilst one small house, or rather cottage, contained them, their numerous offspring, and their wives; amongst whom was the daughter of our Aemilius,

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. i, p. 533.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, vol. i, p. 423.

who, although her father had been twice consul, and had twice triumphed, was not ashamed of her husband's poverty, but proud of his virtue that kept him poor.' <sup>1</sup>

Though perhaps Cato went further than most Romans of his day in the thoroughness of his personal supervision of his boy's education, it was in truth in the family that Roman children learned what their duty was and how to do it. The Roman father, the *pater-familias*, had an authority over his family as absolute as that of king or consul. He could, and on occasion did, put a son to death, and none would interfere. In law, the son could own nothing while his father lived: whatever he acquired was in strictness his father's property. But this tremendous power was very rarely abused, for it was restrained by custom which none dared violate. Custom, for example, required that before any extreme step was taken a council of relations should be consulted; and it declared that whoever sold his wife or his married son was accursed. This authority over the children was restricted, however, to private relations. In public, father and son were as citizens upon an equal footing, and if the son held office the father was subject to him. <sup>2</sup>

Family was a wider, more comprehensive, term in Rome than it is with us: it included not only wife and children and grandchildren, but also servants, whether slave or free. It included, too, the gods of the household. The children were never shut away from their parents: there was no nursery life, for there was no nursery. Everything that went on in the family went on before them, and they were present at all meals to wait upon their parents at table and to listen to their talk. Wherever the father went the boy went with him, to the plough or to the harvest-field, to call upon a friend, to the council hall, and to the Senate itself, until boys were excluded, lest inquisitive mothers should penetrate its secrets. If

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, vol. i, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> See the story of the meeting between Fabius Cunctator and his son the consul. *Ib.*, vol. i, p. 285.



there were to be a funeral oration to commemorate the life and achievements of one who had done the State high service, the boy went with his father to hear it. What he saw, what he heard, from day to day, all went to shape his mind and his behaviour for the life which would one day be his as the father of a family, as a citizen and soldier, perhaps as a senator and consul, of Rome. The parents never forgot the presence of the children. Cato would not take his wife in his arms before them—unless she ran there frightened at a thunder-storm—nor even so much as kiss her.

It was an admirable training while the father was there to give it; but the day was fast approaching when fathers had to serve overseas for years together, and must have lost all touch with home, for there was no sort of private postal service yet—that did not come till the first century B.C. The mothers of Rome did what they could to make good the loss, but of necessity the slave-schoolmaster, a Greek, played ever a greater part, and as the boy did not respect him—the Roman at heart had no respect for Greeks whether slave or free—the association was all unwholesome.

Religion was a living part of the daily life, though religion in Rome meant something quite different from what it means to-day. The gods of the household were ever present among the family, as were the high gods of the State in all State affairs. Every day and at every meal the child joined in the simple acts of worship that must be paid to them as the price of their friendly care. Religion was just that—the scrupulously exact performance of the ritual in private or in public that the gods demanded. That done, you might expect to learn their will at need, and win their favour. The priest's duty went no further. He was not concerned at all with moral training—the family life provided that—and the spiritual side of religion was wanting. What most concerns the minister of religion to-day, the care of souls, did not enter into the Roman conception of religion. The Roman

priests were nobles, statesmen, soldiers, living the same lives, doing the same business as their fellows. Something more like what we mean by religion, with a priesthood wholly devoted to its service, came in later from the East.

Auspices were taken and omens observed on all public occasions of importance, not so much to learn the will of heaven—though that was a secondary purpose—as to win the luck to your side, to avoid anything unchancy, to catch up and appropriate any word or sight which may have a happy significance. The Romans were full of contrivances for manufacturing good luck. Like Balak, if the first sacrifice turned out unpropitious, they tried another, and continued the process until they found what they wanted. They starved the sacred chickens to make sure of their feeding, and then gave them porridge to eat, so that some of the food should drop from their beaks, which was esteemed a particularly happy augury. The Marcellus of the Second Punic War . . . always went in a closed litter when he meant to give battle, and so escaped the chance of seeing anything unlucky.<sup>1</sup> An attendant could always provide the good omen that the consul needed by reporting that he had seen a flash of lightning on the left hand, though he had really seen no such thing. And the lightning had been put to another curious purpose. Like the tall hat of a British Member of Parliament it had been woven into the parliamentary procedure of Rome. In early days the Assembly meeting in the open air had always adjourned for the best of reasons when a thunderstorm came on. Any officer who saw lightning said so and the citizens made for shelter. Lightning at such a time was obviously unlucky, and it was just as easy to 'see' an unlucky flash of lightning when you wanted it as a lucky one. So the practice developed of 'seeing' one when a magistrate wanted to move the adjournment of the Assembly. The lightning was an acknowledged fiction, a mere link in the constitutional machinery of which any

<sup>1</sup> Strachan Davidson, *Cicero*, p. 211

magistrate was entitled to avail himself who was determined to obstruct the legislative business of the day.

There was as yet nothing in the nature of higher education. Rome had no material for it. When it came later it was founded on Greek philosophy and letters and the teachers were Greeks. Young men of that later day were frequently sent to continue their education at the famous universities of Athens or Rhodes. From that time every educated Roman would use Greek as familiarly as his mother tongue.

Though he might in later days take an observer's pleasure in music and the arts it was not for him to practise them: that was for slaves. The Roman's attitude towards them was very much that of Philip of Macedon who, when he had just heard the boy Alexander play a piece of music with skill and charm, said to him severely: 'Are you not ashamed, son, to play so well?'<sup>1</sup>

While the training of the Roman boy was severe, he did not live the loveless, barrack-room life of the Spartan in which the parent had no share. The Roman father, in his own grave stern fashion, was devoted to his boys, and from him and from the family life under his direction came those high qualities which distinguished the Roman of the great days of the Republic from all other peoples of the ancient world. From his father the boy gained his sense of reverence and duty and responsibility (*pietas*), his grave serious ways, his simplicity of life, and the hardihood and cool courage that no reverse could shake. From his father he learned, too, that selfless devotion to the State and the simple ever-present faith in the protection of his gods.

All these high qualities as yet were his, but when riches flowed in upon Rome in the second century B.C. from every part of the vast empire that had fallen to her, they failed him. Generals ceased to obey: the Senate no longer gave wise counsel. The guiding motive was now a base self-interest. The Roman nobles had become perfidious, corrupt, and venal.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. 1, p. 227.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CHALLENGE TO CARTHAGE

ILL Rome had mastered Italy there was no cause for collision with Carthage. Indeed, the two powers had much in common. Their interests in Italy and Sicily were as yet the same. Both had their troubles with the Greeks, and each was glad enough to see the other keeping Greek cities so busy that they could not help their fellows on the other side of the Straits of Messina.

For many years there had been some form of alliance between them, but by the time of the invasion of Pyrrhus it had already become plain that friendly relations could not endure much longer. Rome was becoming interested in the sea. For the moment it was only the Adriatic, but the mistress of Italy must be interested in all the seas that wash its shores and in the islands that lie near them; and Carthage could tolerate no rival there. The sea was at once her livelihood and her protection. Commerce was the very breath of life to her. A treaty of 310 B.C. between the two made plain what was coming. The ports of Spain, Sardinia, and Africa, with the sole exception of Carthage itself, where all ships were welcome. Were closed to the trading ships of Rome.

And once Rome held Tarentum she would be mistress of all Italy; so the one-time ally tried to be before long with her and snatch the prize from under her eyes upper and failed. Rome held Tarentum. The Greek harbour, was hers, and with it she inherited the struggle no longer two centuries the Greeks had been waging with the Carthaginians in Sicily. And she could no longer afford, reckless house in Sicily at her very gates, a rival whose cost. So the sea was so absolute that, as the Carthage conference, and

boast, no Roman could so much as bathe his hands in it without their leave.

The attempt on Tarentum—and Carthage had tried to get Rhegium, too—had swept away all pretence of friendly feeling, and common interest there was no longer any. War must come, and soon. Both powers could see that, and though both were anxious to delay its outbreak if they could, neither dared to lose any opportunity that might offer of strengthening its position. Both had their eyes on Messana. It was the gate of entry into Sicily. Rome already held Rhegium opposite to it, the gate that let her out of Italy. If she held Messana, too, she could come and go in Sicily as she pleased, and the days of the Carthaginian supremacy would be numbered.

Messana was at this time in the hands of a band of Campanian mercenaries, ruffians of the same blood as those who seized Rhegium and had just paid the penalty of their crimes. They had been in the service of Agathocles the savage tyrant of Syracuse, and had been paid off when he died in 289. And disbanded mercenaries, men without master or employment, and as heartless as the swords they wielded, were the terror of all peaceful citizens.

The people of Messana had received them when they reached the Straits on their homeward march—they had no choice—and had entertained them hospitably. In return the ruffians had seized the town, murdered or expelled its male inhabitants and divided the women among them. They called themselves Mamertines—simple sons of Mamers or Mars, the god of war—and the

All the thousand of them quickly terrorized the eastern flow of Sicily. Pyrrhus, championing the Greek cause, part of the exterminated them, but the Carthaginians him. General assistance and he could not take the city. wise counsel. an territory had suffered severely at their interest. The an Pyrrhus had left, Hiero the young ruler corrupt, and venacked and defeated them and besieged

<sup>1</sup> Pl For some years they held out against

him, but at last he got the upper hand, and it was plain that the town must fall unless they could get help. And if it did fall the fate of the mutineers of Rhegium would be theirs, the scourge and the axe.

That was not to be thought of. They could always sell their independence and their town and get protection for the price. Either Rome or Carthage would gladly pay it. The majority favoured Rome. But the Senate did not altogether like the bargain, though they wanted Messana very badly and could not bear to think that it would fall to Carthage if they refused it. There was a point of conscience that might well irk them. Hiero was their ally: he had helped them to take Rhegium. Were they to take the field against him, and on behalf of a gang of murderers as evil as those whom he had helped them to chastise? Lady Macbeth's taunt might have been aimed at them:

What thou wouldst highly  
That wouldst thou holily, wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win.

As though it would rid them of the guilt and ease their consciences, the Senate cast the responsibility for the decision on the Assembly—knowing well what it would be. Urged by two warlike consuls, and tempted by the prize, the gate of Sicily, that rich land of corn and wine and oil, the Assembly decided to accept the offer; whereupon the Senate told their ally Hiero to keep his hands off Messana, and set about raising an army. This was in the year 265. As soon as the army was ready, early in the following year, it was marched down to Rhegium, but by the time the vanguard reached it the Mamertines had changed their minds. The Carthaginian party had got the upper hand: a Carthaginian fleet was riding in the harbour, and the Romans were told that their help was no longer needed. But that information did not stop the commander of the vanguard, one of the daring reckless house of Claudius. He would have Messana at any cost. So he invited the Carthaginian admiral to a conference, and

when he came he seized and held him, and made him deliver up the city as the price of his life and liberty. Small good it did him, for the Carthaginians promptly crucified him for his weakness.

The consul, another Claudius, now crossed with the main body. Hiero, shocked at the treatment he had received, went over to the Carthaginian side; but the motley land-forces of Carthage which Pyrrhus had so easily defeated were no match for the legions. The combined armies of Carthage and Syracuse were badly beaten, and Hiero prudently returned to his old alliance, to be treated by the Romans with peculiar honour, as friend and ally, for the rest of his long life.

The die was cast. The long fight had begun. In the next 118 years there were to be three great wars with Carthage that covered forty years of desperate fighting.

'There are a few wars,' says Warde Fowler,<sup>1</sup> 'great struggles of nation against nation, which will always have an absorbing interest; partly because of their dramatic character, partly because of their far-reaching consequences; and the long fight between Rome and Carthage is assuredly one of them. On the Carthaginian side it produced two of the most extraordinary men, father and son,<sup>2</sup> of whom history has anywhere to tell; and on the Roman side it gives us a vivid picture of the most marvellous endurance during long years of extreme peril that we can find in the annals of any people. And probably no war was ever so pregnant of results for good and ill alike. It welded the whole of Italy south of the Alps into a united country under the rule of Rome, and launched the Romans on a new career of conquest beyond the sea; it laid the foundation of the Roman Empire as we now think of that great system. Yet it left Italy in a state of economic distress from which it is hardly untrue to say that she has never fully recovered, and it changed the character of the Roman people, rich and poor alike, for the worse rather than the better.'

<sup>1</sup> *Rome*, pp. 84, 85.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilcar and Hannibal.

It was, indeed, a formidable enemy that Rome had challenged; for Carthage was by far the greatest sea power of the day, and Rome had not a single ship that could engage her quinqueremes.<sup>1</sup>

Carthage had been founded about a century earlier than Rome by Phoenician emigrants from Tyre. Canaanites by origin, the Phoenicians had been dispossessed by the Israelites and pushed down to the coast, where they occupied a very narrow strip of fertile plain squeezed in between the mountains and the sea, some thirty miles in length, and on the average no more than a bare mile in width. Within those narrow limits there lay two cities, Tyre and Sidon, whose people after Crete had fallen became the great sea-carriers and merchant-princes of antiquity. They were a Semitic people speaking a tongue akin to Hebrew; a peculiar people, as were the Jews, in the eyes of the warring races all around them. Others went out with armies to conquer and destroy: the Phoenicians sailed all known waters, and waters that none but they yet knew, winning peacefully by trade what arms would never win. Trade and the gathering of wealth were all their care; they would buy and sell, fetch and carry, for all the world.

If fighting could be avoided the Phoenicians would never fight. They would own any potentate for master and pay him tribute if he would but leave them free to go about their business. On those terms they acknowledged the suzerainty of Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, and Persia in turn. But assail their city obstruct their trade, threaten wives and children and heaped-up wealth, and they would fight to the death behind walls that were as nearly impregnable as skill could make them.

But Phoenicia lay too much on the path of the warring monarchs of the East and its trade declined. Carthage,<sup>2</sup> 'the New Town,' was remote from them, incomparably

<sup>1</sup> Ships with five banks of oars.

<sup>2</sup> Karthada was the native name. The Greeks called it Karchedon, and the Romans Carthago.



situated deep in the Gulf of Tunis far away west, and many of the noble families and old firms of Tyre sought the greater security of the daughter city. The Carthaginians had as little love of war as Tyre. For centuries they were content to pay a rent for the very ground their city stood upon to its native Libyan owners. But the Greeks pursued them westward as keen competitors. The whole of the eastern half of Sicily passed into Greek hands: Greek colonies, of which Cyrene was foremost, stretched along the African coast: Massilia<sup>1</sup> in the south of Gaul was Greek. To defend her trade against these intruders Carthage was compelled to learn the ways of war. So she took to herself fleets and armies, ceased to pay that ground-rent to the natives, and began to push inland and along the coast, not only in Africa, but in Sicily and Spain and all the islands of the western Mediterranean. But her citizens would not waste the precious hours that were due to commerce and manufacture in camps and on parade-grounds. Her soldiers were either men pressed from native tribes and tributaries, or mercenaries attracted by high pay from among the fighting peoples of the Mediterranean coasts—Gauls, Campanians, Spaniards, northern Greeks, the famous Numidian light horse who rode without bit or bridle, and the almost equally famous slingers from the Balearic Isles who would cast stones that weighed a pound. Only the officers were of Carthaginian birth. These foreign soldiers were held to Carthage by no bond of patriotic feeling. If pay fell short, or if, with the advent of defeat, loot failed, no dependence could be placed upon them. They became dangerous to their masters.

At the beginning of the war the once incomparable Carthaginian navy, the real bulwark of the State, was no longer efficient. It had deteriorated during years of peace. The great ships were there, but the skill that once had fought them was wanting. Tactics had become stereotyped and mechanical. And though the superior

<sup>1</sup> Marseilles.

officers were usually capable and fearless seamen, the oarsmen were galley-slaves without hope, who never left their ships.

By this time Carthage was the first of all Phoenician cities. Its site ensured pre-eminence. Situated on a peninsula joined to the mainland by an isthmus three miles across which was defended by a triple line of walls, the city with its suburbs and its gardens covered an area twenty-three miles in circumference. The citadel quarter alone was large enough to shelter 50,000 people during the last weeks of the final siege in 146. In the war-harbour there were separate docks for 220 ships; and between the lines of walls across the isthmus were stalls for 300 elephants, stabling for 4,000 horses, and quarters for 25,000 men. Just before the last war began the population of the city was 700,000, and when nearly a century and a half later Augustus rebuilt it, very rapidly it became the third city in the empire. When the first war broke out it was reputed the wealthiest city in the world. Its merchant-princes had amassed great estates, and had mastered the secrets of successful farming just as they had mastered the secrets of commerce and navigation. But their estates produced no sturdy farmers to fight their city's battles. They were worked by slaves—always potential enemies—sometimes as many as 20,000 on one vast domain. Roman agriculture was to go the same disastrous way a little later.

In 480 B.C., at the command of Xerxes, who was lord of their parent cities, Tyre and Sidon, they had attacked the Greeks in Sicily, and had met with a great reverse;<sup>1</sup> but for the most part they were not aggressive towards those who did not interfere with them. With those who did, however, they had a short war. We are told that every foreign sailor caught sailing towards Sardinia or Gades was thrown into the sea.

But whether they would or no, war had them in its grip. When Syracuse rose to power in Sicily after its triumph

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 27.

over the Athenian expedition of 415-413, a long and obstinate struggle began with Carthage for the possession of the island. Agathocles was at one time on the point of expelling them from it, even from their great strongholds of Lilybaeum and Panormus which it was to cost Rome so much to win. And there were times when only the walls of Syracuse stood between the Carthaginians and a complete mastery of the island. Between the two Sicily was devastated.

It was Agathocles who exposed their fatal weakness in face of invasion. Their subjects hated them, and when in 310, audaciously quitting Syracuse while the Carthaginians were besieging it, and evading their fleet, he carried his small army of 15,000 mercenaries across to Africa, he lorded it there for four years among defenceless towns that welcomed him, and marched right up to the impregnable walls of Carthage itself, whence none dared issue to give him battle. Only the sea power of the city saved her. It cut him off completely from his Sicilian base and wore him out.

It was not for nothing that the Carthaginians were hated by their subjects. The native Libyans no longer enjoyed the free use of the soil that once had been their own. Those who still farmed it as freemen had to pay as tribute a quarter and sometimes even the half of the produce they had raised, and they were forced to serve in the armies of their masters; but more had lost their freedom altogether, and cultivated the land as slaves in chains. Even the inhabitants of the other Phoenician cities of North Africa hated the oppressors who had deprived them of their independence, and who exacted from them the military service which they shirked themselves. As a measure of prudence the walls of their cities had been destroyed to make revolt impossible. The risk of invasion seemed negligible to a power that held the sea: the risk of revolt was ever present.

How widely different were Rome's relations with the Italian cities! All enjoyed an ample measure of self-

government. Soldiers it is true were expected of them, but they were sent with good will; and in the crisis of Hannibal's invasion there were many that would count Rome's disasters as their own, and shut their gates and man their walls against the enemy.

The government of Carthage was harshly aristocratic. By this time all real power rested with a council known as The Hundred, the members of which were co-opted from among the narrow circle of the leading families and served for life. To this body all the servants of the State, civil and military, were accountable, and its hand was heavy. No considerations of justice were allowed to fetter its procedure. What was to the advantage of its narrow caste was law. Generals conducted campaigns with the knowledge that failure would probably bring down upon them the dreadful doom of crucifixion, and the unsuccessful not seldom chose suicide or even desertion to the enemy as an alternative. The Roman Senate could trust the people and was trusted by them: it could still trust its officers, and it gave them loyal support. The Carthaginian Hundred could trust no one, great or small, and they were always jealous of real ability, fearing lest it should be used against them. No popular vote controlled them, and while things went well, while there were work and food for all and the State paid its way without direct taxation, the people were content to be so governed. The ambitious, the critical, who might have stirred up and led some democratic movement, could usually be bought and silenced by the offer of a well-paid post. So when the dark days came and public indignation overwhelmed The Hundred, the people had no leaders they could turn to.

Such in her strength and in her weakness was the great power that Rome challenged when she seized Messana, little foreseeing what extremity of peril she would be called upon to endure before the final victory was hers. For her military system was out of date. It might meet the demands of a pitched battle in the

usual summer campaign against the citizen-soldiers of some rival city, but it was wholly unsuited to the conduct of a long war against highly trained professional soldiers led by a great commander. The war with Pyrrhus had proved that.

The Roman soldier was not a professional; he was a militia-man, a territorial, called out for service when required, and discharged into civil life at the earliest opportunity. But if the soldier was not a professional still less was the general. The constitution of Rome put the supreme command each year in the hands of the consuls, annual officers elected by a popular vote to fill the chief position in the government. It was as though we were to require a Prime Minister, chosen by the people for a single year of office because he spoke well and was popular, always to be for that year commander-in-chief as well.

Like all Romans the consuls could be trusted to set an example of stubborn courage in a pitched battle fought hand to hand with the cold steel, and they could draw out the lines of a camp and do their drill, and range their troops in the conventional battle order; but in the strategy that surveys a wide field of military operations and plans campaigns by land and sea they had neither training nor experience, and therefore they could be no match for great generals like Hamilcar and Hannibal who had spent their whole lives in the study and practice of the art of war. Moreover, in the war that had just begun not only were the consuls of the year expected to play the part of generals but they must be admirals, too, though they might never have served at sea. Small wonder is it that disasters were many, or that the war dragged out its dreary length for three-and-twenty years (264-241). 'The worst disasters which Rome suffered in this war were due not to the storms and still less to the Carthaginians, but to the presumptuous folly of its own citizen-admirals.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. II, p. 56.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FIRST CARTHAGINIAN WAR

As usual the beginning of the war found the Carthaginians unprepared. Army and navy had to be brought to a war footing. Foreign soldiers had to be hired, shipped to Carthage and formed into armies. The command of the sea, it is true, was theirs, for the Romans could not show themselves upon it, but by land the Roman army operating from Syracuse and Messana had things all its own way for the first two years, and the Carthaginians, as had happened when Pyrrhus invaded the island, were driven back upon their great fortified strongholds in the west, Panormus, Lilybaeum, Drepana. Agrigentum,<sup>1</sup> too, the second city in the island, perched high above the sea, was still in their hands. They had concentrated a large army there, and the Romans in 262 resolved to attempt the capture of the city. But they were to learn how difficult such a siege must be while the Carthaginians could come and go by sea at will. For a second Carthaginian army was landed and drew its lines outside the Roman lines, besieging the besiegers and cutting them off from all supplies. Famine and pestilence, dread allies of besieging forces, now assailed both the beleaguered armies, but the Romans hung on grimly till a pitched battle brought relief. Though the Numidian horse as usual beat the Roman cavalry, the Carthaginian infantry could not face the legions. The Romans won a decisive victory and the city fell. The garrison managed to slip out, but the unhappy citizens could not escape. The Roman soldiers were let loose upon them: the city was given up to plunder and thousands of them were sold into slavery.

<sup>1</sup> Girghenti

It would seem that up to this point the Romans had not seen clearly that they had entered upon a war which could have no ending until the last Carthaginian stronghold had passed into their hands, and the last Carthaginian soldier had left the island. They knew now that there was no stopping place half-way. And they had learnt what it meant to be at war with a power that had complete command of the sea. Not only had the siege of Agrigentum been made infinitely difficult and dangerous, but there had been alarm at home in Italy. Carthaginian squadrons had swooped down on the unprotected coast; small landing parties had been put on shore; the countryside had been held to ransom; commerce had been paralysed. Their movements were swift and unexpected. Long before troops could be hurried to the point of danger they were gone with their booty. Unless measures could be taken to deal with the raiders the seaport towns would be ruined, and it could not be long before invasion on a large scale would follow. It was not only impossible to beat Carthage without a navy, as Agathocles and Pyrrhus had discovered, it was impossible also to protect Italy. The fact that this had not been foreseen shows how limited was the strategic vision of the Senate. They had plenty of hard-fighting officers, but no real military experts to advise them.

But there was no withdrawing from the war now. And as victory and even self-defence were impossible without a fleet, a fleet there must be. Rome, as we have seen, was not entirely without ships and sailors, and her Greek allies in Italy and Sicily had many more. The familiar story which tells how the Romans converted thousands of landsmen into seamen by training them to row at benches set up on shore is a gross exaggeration, if not a mere invention. What they did was wonderful enough without it. Their largest ships, triremes with three banks of oars, were no match for the huge Carthaginian quinqueremes with five. They must build a fleet of quinqueremes; and, using for a model a Car-

Carthaginian vessel that had been cast ashore, they did it. Within a few months they had a fleet of a hundred quinqueremes and twenty or thirty triremes. For officers and men they drew largely upon their allies. Later on, for the heavy labour of the oar—a labour that had no honour—they employed slaves and the poorer class of citizens. The fighting men were Roman legionaries, 120 on each ship, and they fought as stoutly by sea as by land, though the sea service was never popular with the Italian farmers.

Because no fleet so raw could hope to match itself against the Carthaginians in the intricate evolutions designed to put a ship in a position in which it could ram and sink its antagonist or sheer away its oars, the Romans resolved to rely on boarding tactics. The Carthaginian crews, numbering three hundred rowers and less than a score of fighting men, would have no chance if once those legionaries were on their decks. To get them there was the problem, and it was solved by the invention of an ingenious device. In the bows of each ship, slung by a pulley to a mast fitted for the purpose, was a long gangway with a heavy iron spike on the underside at its free end. As soon as an enemy ship approached, the gangway would be swung into position, and lowered with a crash upon its deck. The spike would bite deep and the two ships would be held together. The Roman soldiers would pour across the gangway and the Carthaginian crews would be at their mercy. The gangway was called the *corvus* or raven from the resemblance of the spike to a raven's bill.

Early in the year 260 the new fleet put to sea under the consuls. A division of seventeen ships under one of them fell in with a superior force and every ship was captured; but the main body under the other consul, Caius Duilius, surprised the Carthaginian fleet plundering the coast near Mylae. The *corvus* did its work, and a decisive victory was won. Fifty Carthaginian ships, nearly half the fleet, were taken or destroyed, and the admiral,



who fled to Sardinia, was seized and crucified by his own men.

Rome made the most of her new command of the sea. There were landings in Sardinia and Corsica, and in 258 the fleet made boldly for the African coast. Some successful raids encouraged the Senate to follow the example of Agathocles, whose victories, though he had no command of the sea, were still the talk of Sicily. An invasion in force supported by the fleet might end the war. More ships were built, more crews raised and trained; and in 256 an enormous fleet of 330 quinqueremes was ready under the command of the consuls, Marcus Atilius Regulus and Lucius Manlius, two generals of experience. On board were crews numbering at least 100,000 men, and the fleet carried in addition an expeditionary force of 40,000—two consular armies.

To meet the threat of invasion the Carthaginians had raised and equipped an even larger fleet of 350 ships. So many men had never met in battle on the sea before as were now to meet off Ecnomus on the southern coast of Sicily a few miles to the west of Agrigentum. The Carthaginians no longer despised their enemy. In the battle that followed their more skilful manœuvres were, up to a point, successful, but once more the *corvus* did its work. Some of the Carthaginian vessels feared it and kept out of range, others were carried by boarding as at Mylae. A long and desperately contested struggle ended in a great Roman victory. The Roman fleet now sailed for the Hermaean Promontory,<sup>1</sup> some ninety miles distant from the nearest point of Sicily, and the army was landed, not as the Carthaginians had expected in the Gulf of Carthage where they were ready to give battle again, but outside it on the eastern side of the peninsula where the bay and town of Clypea<sup>2</sup> offered a suitable base readily defensible by land and sea.

<sup>1</sup> Cape Bon.

<sup>2</sup> So called from the shield-shaped eminence on which it stood. The Greeks for the same reason called it *Aspis*.

The open country was at the mercy of the legions who, like the army of Agathocles fifty years before, went where they pleased. Defenceless townships surrendered by scores as they advanced, and the splendid villas and gardens of the wealthy merchants were given up to plunder. The native subjects of Carthage, and especially the Numidians, delighted to see their masters suffer, revolted everywhere and joined in the work of plunder and destruction—to suffer later for the part they played.

The Carthaginian generals would not face the legions in the open country where alone their elephants and their incomparable cavalry could act. Then a fatal over-confidence took possession of the Senate. As though their enemy were some small Italian people whose measure they had taken, and whose territory lay within easy reach of Rome, they recalled Manlius and his army and left Regulus with 15,000 infantry, a mere 500 cavalry, and 40 ships to carry on the campaign.

At first all went well enough. Tunes, ten miles from Carthage, was taken, and the city itself began to suffer from hunger. The spirit of the people was broken and they sued for peace. But Regulus had lost his balance. His terms were impossibly severe. Not only must the Carthaginians give up Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, but they must pay an enormous war indemnity, become tributary allies of Rome, and give up all their fleet—the ships that they loved next to their city. They refused his terms. A frenzy of Semitic fervour seized them. They would fight to the end for city, ships, and freedom; if they could not conquer they would die. They had no good hope for they had lost all confidence in their generals. But by a fortunate chance it happened that among the soldiers of fortune recently recruited in Greece there was a certain Xanthippus, a Lacedaemonian who had seen much service in the ceaseless wars that were distracting that country, and was familiar with the principles of the Macedonian school of war. He had looked about him since he arrived, and he was sure that if the Carthaginian

forces were properly handled, and their cavalry and elephants were given full scope on ground that suited them, the Romans could be beaten. He let it be known that in his opinion they had been victorious hitherto only because the Carthaginians had been so badly led. This got to the ears of the government, who sent for him and, after hearing what he had to say, put him in command. Here was a general who knew far more about the art of war than Regulus. But the stubborn hard-fighting Roman would not withdraw his little army from before the city though he could no longer hope to take it, and in his foolish confidence he omitted all the ordinary precautions that prudent leadership required. He had not even secured his line of retreat to Clypea. So when the Carthaginians took the field in the spring of 255 he recklessly accepted battle on ground that Xanthippus had chosen, and the Romans were broken and annihilated by the irresistible charges of the cavalry and elephants. Only a remnant of two thousand succeeded in making its escape to Clypea. The consul was taken prisoner and loaded with chains.

Of Regulus there remains to tell a famous story that has been immortalized by the poet Horace in one of the most famous of his Odes. The story goes (it has been doubted) that after five years of captivity Regulus was sent to Rome in company with a Carthaginian embassy which was to make one more attempt to negotiate a peace. It was to be his part to support the Carthaginian case, and he had pledged his word to return to Carthage if the embassy failed. When, however, the ambassadors had put their proposals before the Senate, and it seemed likely that they would be accepted out of sympathy with him and his fellow prisoners, he threw the whole weight of his influence upon the other side.

With warning voice of stern rebuke  
Thus Regulus the Senate shook:  
He saw, prophetic, in far days to come,  
The heart corrupt, and future doom of Rome.

'These eyes,' he cried, 'these eyes have seen  
Unbloodied swords from warriors torn,  
And Roman standards nailed in scorn  
On Punic<sup>1</sup> shrines obscene:  
Have seen the hands of freeborn men  
Wrenched back and bound; th' unguarded gate;  
And fields our war laid desolate  
By Romans tilled again.

'What! will the gold-enfranchised slave  
Return more loyal and more brave?  
Ye heap but loss on crime!  
The wool that Cretan dyes disdain  
Can ne'er its virgin hue regain;  
And valour fallen and disgraced  
Revives not in a coward breast  
Its energy sublime.

'The stag released from hunter's toils  
From the dread sight of man recoils.  
Is he more brave than when of old  
He ranged his forest free? Behold  
In him your soldier! He has knelt  
To faithless foes; he too has felt  
The knotted cord; and crouched beneath  
Fear, not of shame, but death.

'He sued for peace tho' vowed to war;  
Will such men, girt in arms once more,  
Dash headlong on the Punic shore?  
No! they will buy their craven lives  
With Punic scorn and Punic gyves.  
O mighty Carthage, rearing high  
Thy fame upon our infamy,  
A city, aye, an empire built  
On Roman ruins, Roman guilt!'

From the chaste kiss, and wild embrace  
Of wife and babes he turned his face,  
A man self-doomed to die;  
Then bent his manly brow, in scorn,  
Resolved, relentless, sad, but stern,  
To earth, all silently;  
Till counsel never heard before  
Had nerved each wavering Senator;  
Till flushed each cheek with patriot shame,  
And surging rose the loud acclaim:

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<sup>1</sup> 'Punic' was the Latin form of the Greek 'Phoenician.'

Then, from his weeping friends, in haste,  
To exile and to death he passed.

He knew the tortures that barbaric hate  
Had stored for him. Exulting in his fate  
With kindly hand he waved away

The crowds that strove his course to stay.  
He passed from all, as when in days of yore,  
His judgment given, thro' client throngs he passed  
In glad Venafrian fields to seek his rest,  
Or Greek Tarentum on the Southern shore.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the war dragged on its endless length. In the course of six years two great Roman fleets were lost at sea because the landsmen admirals would not listen to the warnings of the weather-wise pilots who foretold the approaching storm. A third fleet was thrown away in 249 by the reckless folly of the consul, another Claudius—a son of blind Appius—who took it from its station before Lilybaeum where it was maintaining the blockade, and in attempting to surprise the Carthaginians in harbour at Drepana was himself surprised. Ninety-three of his ships fell into the hands of the enemy, and he himself fled with the remaining thirty. It is plain that his officers knew that he was a reckless and incompetent commander who would ruin all their plans by his headstrong folly. An attempt was made to stop him by a report of unfavourable auspices. The *pullarius*<sup>2</sup> who accompanied every force on active service with the sacred chickens, said that they had refused to eat<sup>3</sup>—the worst of omens. No Roman who feared the gods would fight when warned like that. But a Claudius cared little for gods or omens. 'If they will not eat, they shall drink,' he said, and flung them into the sea. <sup>3</sup> The Romans had quickly replaced the first fleet, and in 254, soon after its loss, when the Carthaginians thought they had them beaten and were occupied in punishing with terrible severity their subjects in Africa who had revolted during the invasion of Regulus, Panormus fell after a short siege. When, however, the second fleet

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Odes*, III. v, line 13 to end (*De Vere*).

<sup>2</sup> The keeper of the sacred chickens.

<sup>3</sup> No doubt they had been fed to repletion beforehand.

genius and patriots, and were far happier with the incompetents whom they employed and crucified by turns.

These men had forgotten two things. Their soldiers, the men of many lands who must be brought home from Sicily, had arms in their hands and would not be denied their pay long overdue: and their subject peoples hated them, and were but waiting for an opportunity to rise and crush them.

Hamilcar knew well enough what would happen if his men got back to Africa and their arrears of pay were still withheld. Prudently he shipped them back by driblets that they might be sent off to their homes, group by group, before they could make trouble. If, as he feared, the government did not intend to pay, they could at least be separated. But with incredible folly the government allowed them to assemble again, and then said there was no money. Of course, mutiny broke out at once and 20,000 furious men marched for the capital. Then the government, having done what no strong man with his wits about him would have dared to do, lapsed into the extreme of weakness and showed their fears. They would not pay the men, but they thought to put them in a good temper by a trumpery bribe; they should have food cheap. But the soldiers were more furious than ever. They threw their officers into chains, and chose to lead them a Campanian runaway slave, a Libyan, and a Gaul, fair samples of their motley host. And then they sent forth word bidding the subject peoples, the Libyans and Numidians, rise with them against their hated masters. The response was immediate. They would win liberty; they would have revenge. Carthaginian blood should flow in atonement for the horrible cruelty of the punishment that had followed the defeat of Regulus.<sup>1</sup> Then three thousand of the petty chiefs had been crucified for their part in the rebellion, and enormous fines in cattle and money had been wrung from the people. So now the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p 106.

very women fanned the flame of mutiny, contributing their gold and their jewels to make good the soldiers' pay.

As the mutineers advanced on Carthage the city militia came out against them, but they were no match for professional soldiers and they were badly led. A disastrous rout was the result, and the city was besieged. At length the government remembered Hamilcar and put him in command. His energy, the strict discipline he enforced, and his influence with the Numidian chiefs enabled him to turn the tide. But for three years and three months the war raged with every circumstance of horror. It was, said Polybius, the most cruel and inhuman of which he had ever heard.

At first the Romans honourably refrained from taking advantage of the plight of Carthage. The rebels invited them to send an army to Africa but they refused. Then the Carthaginian garrison of Sardinia mutinied and, failing to make headway against the natives, offered the island to Rome. It was an offer too tempting to be refused. The security of Italy required that Rome should hold Sardinia, and she took over in 238 what Carthage had held—mainly the coastal regions. When at last the war had ended in an orgy of treachery, torture, and crucifixions, Carthage called on Rome to give back the island, but Rome would not. She had her grievances, too. Once more there was a state of war between the two, but Carthage was in no position to fight, and as the price of peace she had to pay another indemnity of 1,200 talents and to hand over Corsica as well.

That last injury filled the soul of Hamilcar with an undying hate of Rome, and he swore to be revenged. But the ruling clique would never help him. They feared him too much. To get him out of the way they now named him commander-in-chief in Africa, and he went off westward with army and fleet, resolved to carry them across the Straits to Spain, where he would win new lands and new revenues for Carthage and build up the army that one day should exact revenge of Rome. He took

with him Hasdrubal, his son-in-law, to be his right hand, and he took also his three boys, Hannibal, now nine years old, and Hasdrubal and Mago—the lion's brood, he called them—to be reared in the camp for that mission of revenge which as yet he had not avowed to any other. More than forty years later, when an exile in Asia Minor, Hannibal was to tell the tale of the oath which he had been made to take upon an altar as he left the land that he was not to see again for thirty-six years—an oath of undying hate of Rome.

For the last nine years of his life (236–228) Hamilcar devoted his genius as soldier and statesman to the task of building up out of the trading station at Gades, with the small protectorate about it, a great dependent province that within a few years of his death had extended northward to the river Iberus.<sup>1</sup> When he fell in battle in 228, still only a little over forty years of age, he left to Hasdrubal, who succeeded to the command, an army of trained soldiers, largely Spanish and Numidian, to whom the camp was a second home, and who had learnt a fidelity to their standards and an hereditary devotion to their great chief and his 'lion's brood' that were proof against every strain. He left, too, a treasury full to overflowing, which not only paid his soldiers and met all the charges of the administration of his province, but sufficed for the transmission of an annual revenue to Carthage that bought the good will of the populace, made jealousy powerless and silenced opposition. In the new Spanish trade Carthage had found compensation for what she had lost when Sicily and Sardinia were given up to Rome. His foundations were well and truly laid, and his work endured.

Hasdrubal carried on his father-in-law's work and developed it. The Spaniards were taught the scientific agriculture of Carthage. New towns were founded: among them the New Carthage, now Cartagena, where he discovered and worked the great silver mines which

<sup>1</sup> Ebro.



a century later were still yielding to Rome a revenue of £360,000 a year. And when he fell by the hand of an assassin in 220, province and army passed into the hands of Hannibal fit and ready to be employed for the purpose for which they had been created.

Not until it was too late did Rome detect that purpose. She had become curious, it is true, about what was going on in Spain, and an embassy was sent there to discover, if it could, the end to which all this energy and enterprise were directed. It was told politely that the sole purpose was to find the money required for the annual instalments of the war debt, and no other explanation was to be had. It was not to be supposed that the Senate would believe it, but they did not guess the true one, for it had not yet occurred to any Roman mind that the Carthaginian government, or even Hamilcar, would venture to declare war, still less, if less could be, that the fight when it came would open on Italian soil.

About 226, however, Rome became more suspicious. It certainly was not desirable that Carthage should absorb the whole of Spain. Hasdrubal was warned, therefore, not to try to push his conquests north of the Ebro, and promised not to do so. But Rome immediately violated the spirit of the agreement by forming an alliance with the Greek city of Saguntum, well to the south of the boundary line that had just been drawn.

It was plain to the Senate by this time that a second war must come, but they still did not doubt that it would rest with them to choose the time, and they took it for granted that it would begin and end in Africa. How could it be otherwise? The command of the sea was theirs, and there was no other practicable way to Italy. The Alps? What general of repute would commit a great army to all the perils of the mountains? And at the moment they had good reason for wishing to postpone the outbreak, for trouble was brewing in Cisalpine Gaul, and it would be well to have done with the Gauls before challenging Carthage.

For fifty years the Gauls had been quiet,<sup>1</sup> but the memory of the defeats of 284 and 283, and of the terrible punishment that followed them, had now grown dim. The young warriors were tired of inaction. Their dreams were of the days of the Allia and the capture of Rome. What was done then could be done again. Were their forefathers better men than they? The mercenaries who had drifted back from the Carthaginian armies fanned the warlike spirit. And Rome, perhaps without intention, had provoked suspicion as to her aims.

For many years the lands of the Senones, which had been devastated and annexed in 283,<sup>1</sup> had lain unoccupied, used only as State pasture lands, the benefits of which were usurped by the senators and governing classes in the old way that had been so fiercely resented by the plebeians two centuries before. In 232, however, one Caius Flaminius, a tribune of the plebs, 'the first Roman demagogue by profession,'<sup>2</sup> delighted the needy and discontented element of the populace with a proposal, wise enough in itself, that these lands should be made available for settlement. The Senate selfishly resisted it, but Flaminius went over their heads to the Assembly—a thing no tribune had done for generations—and carried his proposal.<sup>3</sup> The result was that he became immensely popular, and not less so because the Senate hated him and showed it.

It was the settlement of these lands that made the Gauls uneasy. They saw in it a threat. It was plain that Rome would some day seek to push her frontier northward to the Alps. Perhaps this was the first step. The rising was delayed, however, for some years, and it was not till 225 that the Gauls moved. Then a great host of foot and horse and chariots began its march and, instead of advancing as expected down the east coast, crossed the Apennines into Etruria and made straight for Rome. The Senate had been taken by surprise.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>2</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. II, p. 324.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 39.

There now comes into the story a man gifted, whether as soldier or statesman, as few men in the world's history. Though bred in the camp and dedicated from childhood to one mission, war and war with Rome, he was no rough soldier. He had the culture of a noble Carthaginian of his day. Whatever a soldier might be called upon to do he could do, and do better than the best. He could wield their weapons, he could run, he was a fine horseman; and he had a turn for shrewd and pithy speech that took the fancy of his men. Mind and body were alike tireless. He could go without sleep or food; he was indifferent to heat and cold; and he would couch upon the ground, if need were, among his outposts wrapped in a soldier's cloak. Among the brave he was the bravest. He could play the dashing cavalry officer in the field, or he could steady his men in a moment of difficulty or peril by an act of daring courage. These qualities endeared him to the common soldier. And his genius was no less manifest among statesmen in the council chamber and generals at headquarters. Wherever he was, whatever he did, he was pre-eminent. As a regimental officer handling men, as a staff officer supervising the multitudinous details of army administration—money, stores, intelligence, the movement of troops—as a general at the front or as a strategist at headquarters planning a campaign, from the bottom to the top, thoroughly and in every detail, he knew the trade of war and brought to it an unmatched genius.

Though anger and envy and meanness have written his history, they have not availed to mar the pure and noble image which it presents. . . . All agree that he combined in rare perfection, discretion and enthusiasm, caution and energy. He was peculiarly marked by that inventive craftiness, which forms one of the leading traits of Phœnician character; he was fond of taking singular and unexpected routes; ambushes and stratagems of all sorts were familiar to him; and he studied the character of his antagonists with unprecedented care. By an unrivalled system of espionage he had regular spies even in Rome—he kept himself informed of the projects of the enemy; he himself was frequently seen wearing disguises and false hair, in order to procure informa-

## BETWEEN THE WARS

tion on some point or other . . . The power which he wielded over men is shown by his incomparable control over an army of various nations and many tongues—an army which never in the worst times mutinied against him <sup>1</sup>

Such was the man against whom Rome's politician-generals of a year were to attempt to match themselves.

And now the time had come for Hannibal to strike. But the Carthaginian government had no wish to begin the war. That was his first difficulty. Somehow he must find an excuse for action. He tried to provoke Saguntum, Rome's new Spanish ally, but the Saguntines contented themselves with complaining to the Senate. The Romans duly sent commissioners to remonstrate, but he refused to see them. He could not answer, he said, for their safety in his camp. They had better go to Carthage. There could be no doubt now of his intentions, and they sent home word that war was imminent.

Then Hannibal boldly forced the hands of his government. He informed them that the Saguntines were attacking their neighbours the Torboletes, subjects of Carthage—though they were doing no such thing—and that perforce he must retaliate. The siege of the city began in the spring of 219. It was intended to be, and was, the first move in the war with Rome. But Rome was fatally slow to take up the challenge. Though the siege lasted for eight months, and the citizens defended themselves with the utmost heroism, she made no move to help them. She was busy with the pirates of Illyria. Dearly she would pay for her neglect of her ally. When the town fell her only action was to send an embassy to Carthage to demand the surrender of the young general. But by this time the rich spoil that Hannibal had sent home for distribution had won the good will of the people and even of the government, and they stood firm. They knew that Rome had long intended their destruction. They had the man, and there could be no better moment to begin the struggle that at best could only be delayed

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol II, p 88

Let Rome do her worst. "Speak out," they said to the embassy that had now come with Rome's last word—"Speak out plainly what has long been secretly hatching in your minds."

'Then the Roman, gathering up his toga, said: "Here we bring you war and peace, take which you please." He was met by a defiant shout bidding him give whichever he preferred, and when, letting the folds of his toga fall, he said that he gave them war, they replied that they accepted war and would carry it on in the same spirit in which they accepted it.'<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile in Rome 'a special service of intercession was conducted; the procession marched through the streets of the city offering prayers at the various temples that the gods would grant a happy and prosperous issue to the war which the people of Rome had now ordered.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Livy, book *xxi*, c. 18; vol *iii*, p. 17

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, book *xxi*, c. 17; vol. *iii*, p. 15

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SECOND CARTHAGINIAN WAR

#### THE FIRST PHASE, 218-216: THE GREAT DISASTERS

SEVENTEEN more years of war, war at its most cruel and destructive! Would it never end, this bloody task of creating and defending an imperial state? And yet who shall say that the achievement did not justify the price, though but a fraction of it had yet been paid when Scipio defeated Hannibal at Zama in 201 and there was peace with Carthage?

If Rome had not won her way to empire by centuries of fighting, if she had not moulded the western world to her pattern by her unequalled power of ruling, 'we may doubt if the work of the Greeks would have been saved for us when the storms from the north, invasions of barbarian peoples, fell at last upon the sunny lands filled with the spirit of Greek thought and the divine works of Greek artists. To Roman discipline, law, government, we owe not only much that even now is every day of practical benefit to us, but the preservation of what we still possess of the treasures of Hellenic genius.'<sup>1</sup>

Though in the fullness of time Rome and the western empire were to fall to the barbarians, her work by then was done. The invaders could not escape from or ignore her tremendous all-pervading influence. Whether they would or no, it penetrated them through and through. They admitted it in speech, culture, administration, law, religion. Their way of life, their outlook upon life, were changed, recast. They knew by now the value of her work, and would never entirely undo it. 'Alike in literature, in art, in philosophy, and in religion, Rome

<sup>1</sup> Warde Fowler, *Rome*, p. 16.

built the bridge over which many of the best thoughts and the finest models of antiquity found their way into the Medieval, and thence into the Modern World.' <sup>1</sup> 'Without her the religious and philosophic thought of modern Europe would be impossible.' <sup>2</sup> But the modern world is largely unconscious of the immensity of its debt. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were in no doubt. To the scholars of the Renaissance, more than a thousand years after the fall of Rome, 'the classical age was still . . . a period immensely superior to their own in all ways.' <sup>3</sup>

Early in the summer of 218 B.C. Hannibal, leaving his brother Hasdrubal behind him to command in Spain, began his march from New Carthage. He fought his way across the Ebro and through northern Spain to the foot of the Pyrenees, whence he sent back part of his army, and then, crossing the mountains at their eastern end with 50,000 foot and 9,000 horse, all veterans, he made for the Rhône. There the Romans, who thought him to be still in Spain, had their first word of him. They had proposed to open the campaign in Spain and Africa. One of the consuls, Tiberius Sempronius Longus, was already in Sicily preparing for the invasion of Africa: the other, Publius Cornelius Scipio, had reached Massilia by sea on the way to Spain when he heard that Hannibal was at that very moment making ready to force the passage of the Rhône three days' march up the river. Pursuit was useless. Scipio did not hesitate. He sent his army on to Spain under his brother Cnaeus to cut Hannibal's communications with his base—the source upon which it was assumed that he would be dependent for supply and reinforcement—and returned himself with all speed to Italy to dispatch the astounding tidings to the Senate, and raise a new army to meet the invader. But the Senate refused to be astounded. They regarded the attempt at invasion as foolhardy. The Alps would certainly defeat it. However, they recalled Sempronius from Sicily, and Scipio took command of the forces on the Po, many miles

<sup>1</sup> *The Legacy of Rome*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 11.

from the foot of the Alps, where battle should have been joined with an army fatigued and demoralized by the passage of the mountains. For the crossing of the Alps had indeed been difficult. Both nature and the hand of man had taken heavy toll of Hannibal's army, and it was an exhausted remnant of 20,000 foot and 6,000 horse that late in September halted at the foot of the mountains on the Italian side for a fortnight's rest among friendly Gauls to recover from the tremendous exertions of the passage. With this little force Hannibal entered upon the mission to which his father had dedicated him in early boyhood.

The Gauls, still smarting from their recent defeats, would give him recruits, especially when he had proved his superiority to the Romans by the two victories won that autumn when he forced the passage, first of the Ticinus, and next of the Trebia, two tributaries of the Po. But they would be at most a small division, for Hannibal did not propose to invade Italy at the head of a host of Gauls. That would have been the way to unite the whole peninsula against him, and he was hoping that all the peoples and cities whom Rome had compelled by war to accept her leadership, Samnites, Umbrians, Etruscans, Greeks, even the Latins themselves, would hail him as a liberator and march with him to her overthrow. Surely they hated Rome with an intensity of passion equal to his own.

It was his great mistake. Italians and Greeks would join him, some readily, some reluctantly, but not yet, and never in the numbers or with the enthusiasm on which he had counted. His intelligence service—his spies and informants—had told him many things, but in his mind there was no true picture of Italy, no accurate understanding of Italian feeling.

There were two things that—under her own unconquerable spirit—saved Rome: and both were due to her own wisdom and forethought. Her allies—the conquered peoples—were required, it is true, to furnish soldiers, and they might not form alliances or concern



themselves with foreign policy; but that was the extent of their obligation. They governed themselves, and they were not taxed. Rome was no oppressor. Many were content to stand by her to the end. That was one thing. The other was that network of fortress-colonies, Roman and 'Latin'—so-called—which had been systematically extended after each successful war, and which now covered the whole country, securing every strategic position along the military roads, each river-crossing, each pass among the hills, each harbour of importance on the coast. Always they were a threat—as they were meant to be—to any area that would rebel. With his small army Hannibal could not protect all his allies, and there was always trouble where he was not present in person. The fortresses interfered continually with his own freedom of movement, and he could not reduce them: their walls defied him, for he had no siege train.

The hatred on which he had counted seldom, in fact, existed, and his early manifestoes inviting the peoples to claim their liberty fell flat. The history of the relations between Carthage and her subject peoples had misled him. It would have been difficult for anybody to give a foreigner a picture of Italy as it really was. Slowly and too late it impressed itself upon his mind as he marched up and down the peninsula. 'Now he would come to a city whose folk might seem to dally with the offer. Yet they had no bitter discontent to set against the lively danger of acceptance. And as for military service—why Hannibal as well certainly expected this from them. A few miles farther on, and he would be calling on "Latins" to fling away the yoke of Rome. How could he realize that these same "Latins" were colonists from Rome, descendants, sons maybe, of Roman citizens themselves? Now he would come to ancient enemies of the city on the Tiber, brooding over ancient wrongs. Here he might enlist recruits. But among these memories was one of Rome's ruthlessness perchance. Their present condition was not insufferable. Should they venture all

on a single throw? Ever and again a true Roman garrison town, or a walled city whose inhabitants proudly called themselves Roman citizens, would defy his direst efforts. This curious complexity of status which prevailed throughout Italy was verily Rome's salvation in the Hannibalic invasion, as it was once again in the still graver peril of the Social War at the beginning of the first century B.C.<sup>1</sup>

But Hannibal could win battles. On the stricken field there did not live his match. He was a master of surprise. None could foretell which way he would go from one point to another, or where he would appear next, or by what ingenious or daring stratagem the next battle would be won.

The first battle at the river Ticinus was a cavalry engagement. Both generals were reconnoitring in person. But the Roman cavalry were never in quality a match for Hannibal's Numidians, and at the Ticinus they were inferior in numbers too. Scipio's force was badly beaten, and he himself severely wounded. He was only saved from capture by the devotion and daring of his son, a boy not yet seventeen, the future conqueror of Hannibal.

Scipio in that engagement had learnt two lessons. In the first place, this new general and the army that he led were widely different from the generals and armies whom the Romans had met in Sicily and Africa during the previous war: and in the second, whatever might be the superiority of the Roman infantry, man for man—and it had still to be proved—the Roman cavalry and light-armed troops were from the start outmatched. But Scipio's term of office was nearly over, and he was incapacitated by his wound. Other generals had still to learn the same lessons, and dearly they would pay for them.

After the defeat at the Ticinus the wounded consul skilfully withdrew his army, and posted himself in a strong position on the hills behind the river Trebia.

<sup>1</sup> Henderson, *The Study of Roman History*, pp. 47, 48

Meanwhile Sempronius arrived from Sicily with reinforcements, and with his lesson still to learn. His term of office, too, was running out, and he wanted to have the glory of defeating Hannibal before it had ended. The warnings of Scipio had no effect upon him. He had only to sit still with the joint army of 40,000 and Hannibal must either force the crossing of the swollen Trebia in December, or come to a halt. But Sempronius was over-confident and rash. Hannibal had his measure and proceeded to bait a trap for him. By cruelly ravaging the country he drew him down into the plain one wet, wintry morning with his men unbreakfasted. A feigned retreat of the Numidians tempted him to cross the river and follow in pursuit. Then suddenly the Romans, tired and wet and hungry, found themselves face to face with the main Carthaginian army drawn up in a carefully chosen position. In spite of their weariness the Roman infantry fought with their traditional obstinacy and courage till they were broken by the emergence of Mago, the youngest of the 'lion's brood,' with a picked force from an ambush in their rear. And even then the leading division of 10,000 men cut its way right through the enemy, and made good its escape to the new fortress of Placentia, teaching Hannibal a lesson in infantry tactics and equipment which he was quick to learn. The rest was ruin.

To persuade the Italians, if he could, that he came as their friend and deliverer, Hannibal released all Italian prisoners without ransom, while the Romans were loaded with chains and treated with severity.

It was only three months since he had entered Italy, and he had been twice victorious. Rome was alarmed. The time for the election of the new consuls was at hand when Sempronius, who had escaped by a miracle of good fortune from the enemy's cavalry, returned to hold them.

Who should the new generals be? There was one man in Rome who was very sure that he, if no other, was a match for Hannibal, and the populace thought so too.

That was Caius Flaminius.<sup>1</sup> He next was to lead his army to the slaughter. He was elected in spite of the opposition of the Senate, and when they tried to prevent him from taking up his command by making difficulties about the auspices and such-like matters, he slipped away secretly from the city without his lictors or the insignia of office, and, worse still, without observance of his duties towards the gods. He made his way at once to Arretium<sup>2</sup> in Etruria, where the western of the two highways to the north then ended at the foot of the Apennines, and joined the army, some 30,000 strong, that was waiting for him there. The rank and file, like the multitude at Rome, believed in him: the higher officers who knew the trade of war did not.

Meanwhile Hannibal, who had taken his measure, too, was moving south. He crossed the Apennines into Etruria well to the west, and leaving Arretium and Flaminius on one side, marched along the northern shore of the Trasimene Lake towards Perusia, pillaging the country far and wide as he went. That was more than Flaminius could bear. The bait drew him as it had drawn Sempronius. He would not wait for his colleague Cnaeus Servilius to join him with his army from Ariminum on the Adriatic, where he had been watching the eastern road, but followed Hannibal and walked straight into the trap that had been set for him. Without reconnoitring the ground he led his army on a foggy April morning through a narrow defile on to a little plain by the lake side where he found the main Carthaginian army in position waiting for him. The defile was blocked behind him as soon as he had left it: the hills that fringed the plain concealed light troops and cavalry: Hannibal was in front, and on the other side was the lake. There was no escape. The marching column could never form a line of battle, and the main body was cut to pieces as it stood. As at the Trebia, the head of the column, 6,000 strong, fought its way through the middle of the

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 117-19.

<sup>2</sup> Arezzo.

enemy, only, however, to be rounded up and captured on the following day. Fifteen thousand of the Romans had fallen on the field of battle, Flaminius among them, and as many more were captured. The army was annihilated. The Carthaginian loss was trifling. Once more the Italian prisoners were set free.

All Etruria was lost for the time, and there was panic in Rome. Quintus Fabius Maximus, who was to earn the title of Cunctator—the Delayer, the man who, as the contemporary poet Ennius said, by delay restored the fortunes of the State—was appointed dictator to conduct the defence of the city, and the bridges over the Tiber were broken down. But Hannibal did not come. He could not hope to take Rome by storm, and lacking a siege train he could not besiege it. So he recrossed the Apennines into Apulia, and there reorganized his African infantry on the Roman model, and equipped them with Roman weapons, of which by now he had an abundance. But not a single Italian town had as yet come over to him. One after another they closed their gates, and perforce he passed them by. Under Fabius Rome had a respite of more than a year before the next blow fell, the worst of all, at Cannae.

Fabius, a man past seventy years of age, was a Roman of the old school. Slow, cautious, obstinate, precise, 'he looked to a methodical prosecution of the war as—next to sacrifices and prayer—the means of saving the State.'<sup>1</sup>

'On the very day of his entrance upon office,' says Livy,<sup>2</sup> 'he summoned a meeting of the Senate, and commenced by discussing matters of religion. He made it quite clear to the senators that Caius Flaminius's fault lay much more in his neglect of the auspices and of his religious duties than in bad generalship and foolhardiness.' He had offended the gods, and they had punished him. So there were solemn processions and services of intercession and vows of offerings; and the blood of choice victims flowed.

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. ii, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Book xxii, c. 9; vol. iii, p. 71.

Then Fabius left for the army determined to risk no more battles. Wherever Hannibal went he followed him cautiously, keeping always above him on the slopes of the hills, and earning from the impatient the title of 'Hannibal's lackey.' He was not to be tempted to fight by the ravaging of the countryside. He even ordered the people to burn their own houses and destroy their crops, so that Hannibal might not be able to collect the supplies he needed. But the city was soon loud in protest, and Hannibal added to his unpopularity and pointed suspicion at him by sparing his estates when all the country round was burnt and plundered.

One of the loudest of his detractors in the Forum was a certain Marcus Terentius Varro. He was no soldier, but as a clever speaker he had made himself a favourite with the masses. He came of very humble stock,<sup>1</sup> a fact which increased his popularity. The crowds in the Forum now talked of nothing but the war. There were plenty of amateur generals 'accustomed to sketch plans of battle on the tables of taverns, and to look down on the regular service by virtue of their inborn genius for strategy,'<sup>2</sup> and they could always get a hearing. Varro was one of them, and like Flaminius before him, he found it easy to convince the masses that he knew the way to beat Hannibal. And it was not the way approved by the Senate. But the common folk at this time looked with suspicion and ill-will upon all senators, for the story had got about that they were in conspiracy with the enemy, and watched the burning of the villages and the sufferings of the poor with secret satisfaction. So when the time of the elections came round Varro was chosen plebeian consul. His patrician colleague was Lucius Aemilius Paullus, an experienced general, but unpopular. Everybody at Rome knew—and Hannibal to his joy knew, too—that the election of Varro meant another great battle. Preparations were made for the campaign on a vast scale. Eight legions

<sup>1</sup> It was said that he was a butcher's son.

<sup>2</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. ii, p. 338

were raised, each of which was brought to the strength of 5,000 men, and there were allies in equal number, an army in all of nearly 80,000. It was marched into Apulia where Hannibal with 50,000 awaited it in the plains where his cavalry could act to best advantage. He had just taken the little town of Cannae by the river Aufidus, an important magazine of military stores. As the two consular armies were combined the consuls were commanding on alternate days—a most foolish practice—and it was impossible for Aemilius to prevent Varro from giving battle.

Hannibal had his heavy infantry in the centre of the line, with the light-armed troops in front: cavalry formed the two wings: in reserve he had the famous Numidians. The Roman infantry in the centre, advancing in a deep column in close formation, at first drove all before it by sheer weight of numbers. But Hannibal had seen that happen twice before, and he would now turn that column's weight and prowess to its destruction. As it advanced the Carthaginian centre bent back into the shape of a deep crescent, whose horns were the mouth of what would soon become a bag: and then to stiffen the bottom of the bag the Numidians appeared. The column could advance no further. The Carthaginian infantry re-formed and began to attack in front and rear. Under pressure the Romans were wedged into the bag in a solid mass. They could neither fight nor flee, and the greater part of them never struck a blow. Then the battle became a slaughter more terrible than the slaughter by the Trasimene Lake. There were 70,000 dead and 10,000 prisoners, who included a force from a local garrison. A bare 6,000 with Varro among them escaped from the battlefield to safety behind the walls of Canusium and Venusia. Among the dead were Aemilius, with both the consuls of the previous year, eighty senators, and so many of the knights that three bushels of gold rings—the badge of rank—were taken from their fingers. Hannibal's loss was less than 6,000, and as at the Trasimene Lake, the greater part of it had fallen upon the division of Gauls.

Now at last every one thought that Rome must fall—every one but Hannibal. But though the Romans always said that his refusal to march on the city had saved it, he knew better than any man what his army could achieve. He moved instead into Samnium, and thence into Campania. And now the discontented and the fearful began to join him. The open country of the south and many of the Greek cities sooner or later came over to him—Bruttium, that stood by him to the end, and most of Lucania and Samnium, though Samnites and Lucanians after years of peace were no longer the warriors they once had been. But there was little real enthusiasm for his cause: with most it was despair that provoked the change of sides. By far the most important of his new allies was the great city of Capua, which came over to him after much hesitation and balancing of conditions. For remembering the fate of Tarentum when it invited Pyrrhus within its walls, Capua required of Hannibal that he would not compel the Campanians to take service in his army. Fortunately for Rome the network of fortress-colonies held firm.

Hannibal had received as yet no reinforcement or supply from Spain, where the two Scipios kept Hasdrubal busy, and Carthage itself had done nothing for him. Pay had fallen into arrear; the ranks of his veterans were thinning; he needed men and money. Mago was sent to Carthage to ask for them, and the reinforcements were voted: but they never reached Hannibal, for the position in Spain had become so critical that they had to be sent there instead.

And what of Rome meanwhile? For a moment there was panic. The cries of the mourners filled the streets, for the families were few that had not dead to mourn. Once more all tongues were busy with rumours of evil portents. The populace despaired of the city, that had surely been abandoned by her gods. But old Fabius and the other senators of note in Rome assumed control. Sternly they ordered the shrieking women to



remain indoors: all public lamentation was forbidden: the gates were guarded to prevent desertion: the gods were petitioned with redoubled fervour. Once more there was resort to the Sibylline Books and the grim human sacrifices were repeated.

The gravity of the position had silenced the demagogues. The senators set a noble example of forbearance. There were no recriminations. When Varro returned to the city from Canusium they met him at the gate, not to tax him with the dreadful consequences of his folly but—mark this!—to thank him gravely for not despairing of the Republic, or in other words, for not committing suicide. As Livy says, if he had been a Carthaginian general in like circumstances he would have been crucified.

A united people now bent their whole energy upon the task before them. There were no more politician-consuls. Only men of training and experience henceforth had the charge of armies. The Senate chose them: the Assembly was contented to ratify its choice. Democracy, loud-voiced and raw and inexperienced, had brought the State to the very verge of ruin. For the time it had learnt its lesson and left wiser heads to deal with a task which called for other qualities than mere readiness of speech.

If Hannibal had still any hope that his great victory would break Rome's spirit he was quickly undeceived. Immediately after the battle he had shown himself willing to open negotiations for peace, and offered to permit the ransom of the prisoners, but the Senate would not listen to either suggestion. In the same stern unbending spirit they dealt with the remnant that had escaped from the battlefield. They were formed into two legions and condemned to serve in disgrace till the end of the war without leave and without pay. They might not even build winter quarters for themselves within ten miles of any town. They were sent to Sicily and remained there till Scipio took them to Africa to share with him the glory of Hannibal's final overthrow at Zama.

Such was the spirit in which Rome met her great disaster.

## CHAPTER XVII

### WEARING HANNIBAL DOWN (216-207)

#### CAPUA, SICILY, TARENTUM

To fill the ranks of the army depleted by Cannae's slaughter, all the men between the ages of seventeen and forty-five were called up for service. Even slaves, eight thousand of them, were purchased by the State and sent to serve with the hope of freedom to inspire them to gallantry. To replace arms and armour lost in such prodigious quantities old spoils were taken down from the temples, and smith and armourer were set to work.

A little group of proven generals, most of them elderly, shared the principal commands year after year. The same names occur again and again as consuls, praetors, proconsuls. Chief among them were old Fabius himself, Marcus Claudius Marcellus, and Quintus Fulvius Flaccus. They no longer laid down their commands at the end of the year of office.

Marcellus, a Roman of the old type, rough and uncultured, but the soul of honour and of valour, had distinguished himself as consul in the war against the Gauls, and it was to him, a man now of middle age, that after the disaster at Cannae Senate and people turned. He had learnt his soldiering against Hamilcar in Sicily thirty years before. A born leader of men and adventurous by temperament, he was more apt to risk a blow than Fabius, even at Hannibal himself. The Sword of Rome they called him, as they called Fabius the Shield. Before the dreadful year 216 ended he had repelled an attack made by Hannibal in person upon the fortress of Nola, which lay east of Naples and south of Capua and was a key to both. A majority of the native element

in the population were anti-Roman, and they were corresponding with Hannibal. The principal people, as usual, were on the side of Rome, and fearing that they would be overpowered they had called on Marcellus for protection. He occupied the town, and when Hannibal appeared, expecting it to be betrayed to him, the gates were suddenly thrown open and Marcellus and his men dashed out. Hannibal's attack was beaten off and he withdrew. It was his first reverse.

The episode was typical of the Italian war in the years that followed. Hannibal's movements, his rapid marches and counter-marches, were directed to two main ends—the protection of his allies, and especially Capua, from Rome's vengeance, and the capture of a good harbour (Naples, perhaps, or better still, Tarentum) which would enable him to open up communication by sea with Carthage, and with Macedonia, an ally of first-rate importance if only he could induce King Philip V to give effective help.

For a time he was able to prevent the Romans from blockading Capua, though they were generally in its neighbourhood, and its farm lands were so perpetually ravaged that food supplies were running low. But not even his rapidity of movement could save the doomed city from the three Roman armies that in 212 gathered round it and hung grimly on. The three camps, strongly entrenched and connected by fortified lines, were impregnable, and they prevented all access to the city. The blockade was complete. Surrender would be inevitable when its provisions were exhausted. As a last effort to save it, Hannibal in the following year (211) made a sudden dash at Rome. It was the only time in fifteen years that he saw the city. He had no hope of taking it, but he did expect that the alarm would cause the armies round Capua to be withdrawn. Even in that he was disappointed, and after a short stay he marched back towards Capua, but the lines about it were still stoutly held, and he could only leave it to the fate that nothing

any longer could avert. The night before the surrender twenty-seven of the Capuan senators met and after a last meal all drank of a poisoned cup. Their end was happy in comparison with that which awaited those who chose to live, for the proconsul Fulvius had fifty-three of them scourged and beheaded in his presence in the market-places of Cales and Teanum, whither they had been taken, and refused, till he had made an end of the savage work, to open a dispatch from Rome which he rightly suspected would tell him to take no action till he knew the Senate's will. Others of the leading men were imprisoned; the estates of the wealthy were confiscated; thousands of the citizens were sold into slavery; and Capua, with its extensive territory, became the property of the Roman State. 'From the second city it was reduced into the first village in Italy.'

The news of its fate resounded through the whole peninsula. Its revolt after Cannae had seemed to presage the downfall of Rome: its recapture marked the beginning of Hannibal's decline. It more than balanced the loss of Tarentum by treachery in 212—a seaport at last: but Hannibal had no benefit of it, for the citadel which commanded the harbour held out until old Fabius, consul for the fifth time and eighty years of age, recovered the city—also by treachery—three years later. It was his last military achievement. Again a terrible vengeance was taken. The garrison was put to the sword: the soldiers sacked the town: 30,000 citizens were sold as slaves: and the riches of Tarentum were poured into the impoverished treasury at Rome. The only spoil that Fabius would not touch was the statues and the works of art. 'When his secretary asked him what he wished to have done with some colossal statues—they were deities, each represented in his appropriate dress and in a fighting attitude—he ordered them to be left to the Tarentines who had felt their wrath.'<sup>1</sup>

Marcellus after the capture of Syracuse had acted

<sup>1</sup> Livy, book xxvii, c. 16; vol. iv, p. 91.

differently. For trouble had broken out in Sicily in 214. Not that the Sicilians had any love for Carthage, but the opportunity of recovering their independence seemed too good to lose. Old Hiero had been faithful to the last. After the early disasters he had offered the Senate great gifts of money, as did the Greek cities of the south, but Roman pride refused them, though with courteous expressions of appreciation. In 216, however, he had died after a reign of fifty-four years, and he was succeeded by his grandson, a foolish boy who made himself tyrant with Carthaginian aid, and was assassinated in the following year. A republic was then set up which at first was inclined to lean to Rome. But while its decision was still in the balance the people of Leontini, one of its subject cities, declared themselves independent, and admitted Hannibal's agents. Marcellus, who was sent to Sicily late in 214 to take command, besieged the town and took it. He spared the inhabitants, but punished the garrison of mercenaries, many of them Roman deserters, with terrible severity. Two thousand of them were scourged and executed. He had expected the savage act to stamp out revolt, but it had the opposite effect. There were many Roman slaves and deserters in the Syracusan army too, and as they dared not now let themselves fall into his hands, they compelled the reluctant Syracusans to shut their gates against him. A long siege followed, and the city was assailed by land and sea. Then it was that the famous mathematician and astronomer, Archimedes, now an old man of seventy-four, turned his skill as an inventor to the making of ingenious engines, among them catapults of varying size and range—the artillery of the day—and great grabs that lifted ships bodily out of the water and dashed them back again. He was so successful that Marcellus ceased to press the siege, and converted it into a blockade. Progress was slow, for the blockade was incomplete; but at last in 212 a night attack won a lodgement within the walls, and the Romans occupied the heights of the northern suburbs. The citizens would

gladly have surrendered, but the mercenaries would not permit it. A little later, however, treachery admitted Marcellus into the inner city: the deserters escaped, and the citizens, who were more to be pitied than blamed, were left to bear the full measure of the Roman wrath. The wealthy city was given up to pillage. Marcellus had ordered that the lives of the citizens should be spared, but the soldiers got out of hand, and many were done to death, among them Archimedes, whom especially he had wished to save. The ornaments of the city, the statues and pictures of which it was full, were removed to Rome, and that, says Livy,<sup>1</sup> 'was the beginning of our admiration for Greek works of art, which has led to the present reckless spoliation of every kind of treasure, sacred and profane.' It was this example that Fabius declined to follow when he took Tarentum: he let the city keep its angry gods.

The Carthaginians were still in possession of Agrigentum, and the reconquest of Sicily was not completed till two years later.

Hannibal's army was not the sole danger that confronted Rome. There was always the risk that Hasdrubal might elude the Scipios, who were watching him in Spain, and descend on Italy to help his brother—as presently he did. And there was danger too from beyond the Adriatic. Since 215 a Roman fleet and army had been stationed at Brundisium to meet the threat of a Macedonian landing, which both sides at this time expected. But Philip never came. As attack was the surest defence the Romans landed in Epirus, and to keep Philip busy they fostered the divisions of Greece, where the different states were always at each other's throats, and they allied themselves with King Attalus of Pergamus in Asia Minor, whose fleet joined theirs in the Aegean and threatened the Macedonians and their Greek allies from the east as well. Rome's arm was reaching far.

But at the moment the gravest danger was in Spain. A son of Hamilcar, with his single aim and his burning

<sup>1</sup> Book xxv, c. 40; vol. iv, p. 289.

hate inspiring every move, was a very different enemy from Philip. He would miss no opportunity that offered. And Hasdrubal's opportunity was coming.

For years the Roman army in Spain under the two Scipios had held the upper hand, but in 212 or 211 (the date is uncertain) a powerful Spanish tribe that was taking Roman pay deserted at a crisis. The brothers were defeated separately, and both were killed. For the time the Carthaginians recovered the ground that they had lost, and the Romans were back upon the Ebro, where a remnant bravely led held the enemy at bay until the fall of Capua permitted reinforcements to be sent from Italy. A year later the young Publius Cornelius Scipio, already a favourite with the Roman populace, was sent to Spain at the age of twenty-four to take command. Here was the man of genius and enterprise for whom Rome had waited for so long. A few years later he would be called to a still higher task—the ending of the war.

Scipio arrived in Spain in the course of the year 210, and at once set himself to plan a great offensive. The Carthaginians had three armies there at the time, but they were widely separated. Hasdrubal and Mago commanded two of them, another Hasdrubal, the son of Gisco, the third. But the sons of Hamilcar and the son of Gisco were at variance, and none of the three had dreamed of a Roman offensive. Early in 209 Scipio struck—struck suddenly. He crossed the Ebro, and marched with true Roman rapidity for New Carthage. It was but weakly defended, and the nearest Carthaginian army was ten days' march away. But there was no time to lose. He must have the town before the enemy could reach it. The day after his arrival the assault was delivered, and before night the capital city of Spain, with its rich treasury, its great granaries, and its arsenal, was in Roman hands. After a fierce assault on the landward side had diverted the attention of the garrison, a daring advance through the sea when the ebb-tide was at its lowest had found the walls on the harbour side unde-

fended. Neptune, as Scipio had promised his men, had shown them the way. Then and thereafter they believed him to be a favourite of the gods and a recipient of their inspiration. He treated the prisoners and citizens with the generous courtesy that marked him all his days and eased his progress, winning hearts for him wherever he went, charming later even the great Hannibal himself. Then, leaving a strong garrison to hold the city, he made his way rapidly back to Tarraco,<sup>1</sup> the headquarters of the Roman power. His command, like that of his father and uncle before him, was now extended indefinitely.

It was already known that Hasdrubal was preparing for a new invasion of Italy that should restore his brother's fortunes. Scipio, who had defeated him heavily at Baecula in the modern Andalusia, lay at Tarraco to block his path, expecting him to take the same route as Hannibal; but Hasdrubal evaded him, and, fighting his way through the Spanish tribes to the north coast, entered Gaul by the western passes of the Pyrenees, and spent the winter of 208-207 in Aquitaine. The dread news reached Rome from friendly Massilia, and suddenly the drama mounts again to a pitch of intensity that it had not reached since Cannae. The fate of Rome was once more in the balance.

And Rome was exhausted, terribly exhausted. The outlook was bleak. How could she venture to hope that this time the gods would be kind? In 209 it had even seemed that the last bulwark of the Republic would collapse. It was the steady valour and devotion of the thirty fortress-colonies scattered up and down the peninsula that had given the Roman armies so many sure bases of operations, keeping revolt in check and hindering the movements of Hannibal at every turn. But in that year, to the consternation of the Senate, there were signs that even they were wavering. Twelve of them, mostly older colonies in Etruria and Latium, declared that they could no longer furnish men and money. It was not that they wished to open their gates to Hannibal. They would have

<sup>1</sup> The modern Tarragona.



repelled the suggestion with horror. They were exhausted and they lacked the indomitable spirit that even in the moment of exhaustion will put forth its greatest effort. Fortunately the remaining eighteen, headed by Volscian Fregellae, stood firm. The refusal of the twelve was accepted and ignored. Rome could not compel or punish—yet. Among the Etruscan cities there were even mutterings of revolt, and a display of force was necessary to silence them.

But who could wonder—who but a Roman—if the spirit of Italy was sinking under exhaustion and despair? Two hundred thousand men, more than a quarter of the manhood of the nation, were under arms by land and sea. The burden of feeding, clothing, and paying them was immensely heavy, and the treasury was almost empty. Though the land-tax, the chief source of revenue, had been doubled after Cannae, the yield was shrinking, for the enemy occupied large areas, and everywhere the farm lands were going out of cultivation. Even where they had not felt the ravages of war there were not enough hands to till them. If Egypt had not been willing to ship corn to Italy, making her profit in Rome's need, and if the recovery of Sicily had not permitted the revival of agriculture there, the population of the city must have starved. It had fallen already by almost one-fourth. Savings had vanished: poverty and want were rife.

Every device known to financiers had been exploited. Huge loans had been contracted, and the coinage had been debased. Prices, of course, soared and corn now cost three times what it had cost before the war. Fortunately those who had money to lend still had faith in Rome's ultimate victory. Her credit held. The owners of the slaves who had been bought and armed<sup>1</sup> agreed to wait for payment till the end of the war. Citizens who could afford it refused to take the soldier's pay. Contractors whose business it was to keep the public buildings in repair did the work and were content to postpone the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 135.

demand for payment till Hannibal was beaten. To the fleet was manned by the aid of a voluntary loan, and when the second call caused grumbling the senators, to set an example, brought to the treasury all the store of precious metals in their houses, all their gold and silver plate, and the very ornaments of their wives and daughters (whose expenditure on dress in common with that of all other women had been severely limited by law), reserving only a few of the most precious personal possessions, and two pounds of silver 'that they may have a dish and salt-cellar for the gods'<sup>1</sup>—those friendly household gods, the Lares and Penates, before whose images offerings of bread and salt were placed in reverent affection.

Exhaustion and despondency encouraged superstitious practices of foreign origin. The feeling was general in Rome that her gods had deserted her. 'The Roman ritual was growing into disuse not only in secret and in private houses; even in public places, in the Forum and the Capitol, crowds of women were to be seen who were offering neither sacrifices nor prayers in accordance with ancient usage. Unauthorized sacrificers and diviners had got possession of men's minds, and the numbers of their dupes were swelled by the crowds of country people whom poverty or fear had driven into the City, and whose fields had lain untilled owing to the length of the war or had been desolated by the enemy. These impostors found their profit in trading upon the ignorance of others, and they practised their calling with as much effrontery as if they had been duly authorized by the State.'<sup>2</sup> The Senate at last intervened and decreed that 'all those who had in their possession any manuals of divination or forms of prayer or sacrificial ritual in writing were to bring all their books and writings to [the City praetor] before the 1st of April, and no one was to use any strange or foreign form of sacrifice in any public or consecrated place.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Livy, book xxvi, c. 36; vol. iv, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, book xxv, c. 1; vol. iii, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*

repelloguery and superstition in many forms did not fail and make their appearance in all parts of Europe during the Great War of 1914-18. The causes were the same. The terrible anxiety of all, and the grief of the bereaved, produced as in Rome a craving for excitement and a yearning for comfort, assurance, revelation, not provided by the orthodox religion.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## VICTORY AT LAST

## THE METAURUS, 207: ZAMA, 201

It was a weary, dispirited, and terribly anxious Rome that received early in 207 the terrifying news of Hasdrubal's approach. If three large armies acting at once against Hannibal alone could not subdue him, what hope was there of victory now that his brother was on the way to join him? And Marcellus, the Sword of Rome, consul for the fifth time, had just fallen, trapped in an ambush with his fellow consul while reconnoitring Hannibal's position in person attended only by a small cavalry escort.

Hasdrubal approaching and two new generals to find! The choice was difficult and discouraging. This was no time for Fabian tactics even if Fabius had not been now too old; and among the rest there was not one who had proved himself a match for Hannibal. At length for patrician consul the choice fell on one of the famous Claudian house, Marcus Claudius Nero, who had commanded one of the armies before Capua. He was able, vigorous, and, like most of the Claudii, self-reliant; and in a crisis he would be swift to take a decision and swift to act; but he was harsh, irritable, and unpopular. For his plebeian colleague one Marcus Livius was chosen after anxious search. It was a curious choice. No man could well be less popular than he, and he had held no command at all since the year before the war began. Then he had been victorious over the Illyrians, and had been given a triumph. But he had been accused afterwards of dealing improperly with the booty taken, and had been fined. The sentence was unjust, and he retired

in moody resentment to the country. There he remained, a soured man, until he was ordered some years later to resume his seat in the Senate, and now most unwillingly, and only in obedience to the Senate's command, he accepted the consulship again from the people who had condemned him and whom he could not forgive. And Nero was known to be his personal enemy. With difficulty the two were publicly reconciled, and they left Rome for their commands, Nero southwards to face Hannibal, Livius northwards towards Cisalpine Gaul to give battle to Hasdrubal, who had crossed the Alps with unexpected ease and was now on the Po besieging Placentia. Hannibal, who had gathered his forces in hilly Bruttium, his favourite retreat, for it was a natural fortress, was meanwhile marching with bewildering rapidity from one part of southern Italy to another. Finally he reached Apulia and there halted, encamping first by Venusia and then by Canusium with its memories of Cannae. In that neighbourhood he would wait until he had fuller information as to his brother's movements. Nero had followed him closely and formed camp opposite to him at both places. Meanwhile Hasdrubal, abandoning the fruitless siege of Placentia, had sent off six troopers with dispatches explaining his plans and line of march, but owing to Hannibal's rapid movements they missed him and were captured. From their dispatches Nero now learnt that Hasdrubal intended to follow the Flaminian Way by the coast past Ariminum as far as Fanum. Then he would turn west and cross the Apennines towards Narnia, where the two were to meet. With true Claudian decision Nero disregarded the rule that tied him to his own province and army, and without waiting for the Senate's permission, which he knew he would not get, he left his army face to face with Hannibal 'without a general with full powers or one who could take the auspices'—procedure shocking to old-fashioned notions—and marched with seven thousand picked men to join Livius at Sena Gallica, some 250 miles away, with the

purpose of forcing Hasdrubal to fight at once before his brother could move to his support. At the same time he sent on the captured dispatches to the Senate and told them of his movements.

Livy gives a brilliant description of the fateful march. We can feel the tension and anxiety throbbing through each line of it. Nero had sent messengers ahead 'to warn the inhabitants to collect all the supplies from the towns and the country districts and have them in readiness on the line of march to feed the troops. They were also to bring their horses and other draught animals so that there might be an ample supply of vehicles for the men who fell out through fatigue.'<sup>1</sup> The little army advanced 'amidst vows and prayers and blessings from the lines of men and women who were gathered everywhere out of the fields and homesteads. They were called the defenders of the republic, the vindicators of the city and sovereignty of Rome; upon their swords and strong right hands depended all security and liberty for the people and their children. The bystanders prayed to all the gods and goddesses to grant them a safe and prosperous march, a successful battle and an early victory over their foes. . . . Then they invited the soldiers to take what they had brought for them, each begging and entreating them to take from his hands rather than from any one else's what would be of use to them and their draught animals, and loading them with presents of all sorts. The soldiers showed the utmost moderation and refused to accept anything that was not absolutely necessary. They did not interrupt their march or leave the ranks or even halt to take food; day and night they went steadily on, hardly allowing themselves the rest which nature demanded.

'The consul sent messages in advance to announce his coming to his colleague, and to inquire whether it would be better to come secretly or openly, by night or by day, and also whether to occupy the same camp or separate ones. It was thought better that he should come by night.

<sup>1</sup> Book xxvii, c. 43; vol. iv, p. 125.

'The consul Livius had issued a secret order . . . that the tribunes<sup>1</sup> should take in the tribunes who were coming; the centurions, the centurions; the cavalry, their mounted comrades; and the legionaries, the infantry. It was not desirable to extend the camp, his object was to keep the enemy in ignorance of the other consul's arrival. . . .

'Livius's camp was in the neighbourhood of Sena, and Hasdrubal was about half a mile distant. When he found that he was nearing the place, the consul halted where he was screened by the mountains, so as not to enter the camp before night. Then the men entered in silence, and were conducted to the tents, each by a man of his own rank, where they received the warmest of welcomes and most hospitable entertainment.

'Next day a council of war was held, at which the praetor Lucius Porcius Licinus<sup>2</sup> was present. His camp was now contiguous with that of the consuls. . . . Many of those present at the council were in favour of postponing battle in order that Nero might recruit his troops, worn out with the length of the march and want of sleep, and also might have a few days for getting to know his enemy. Nero tried to dissuade them from this course, and earnestly implored them not to endanger the success of his plan after he had made it perfectly safe by the rapidity of his march.'

He pointed out that Hannibal did not know that he had left Canusium, nor Hasdrubal that he had come to Sena, but both must soon discover the truth and therefore the battle should be fought at once. His arguments prevailed, and 'as soon as the council broke up, the red ensign was displayed, and the army at once took the field. The enemy were already standing in front of their camp in battle order. But there was a pause. Hasdrubal had ridden to the front with a handful of cavalry, when he

<sup>1</sup> There were six in each legion.

<sup>2</sup> He had been watching Cisalpine Gaul, and had retreated before Hasdrubal until he joined Livius.

noticed in the hostile ranks some well-worn shields which he had not seen before, and some unusually lean horses; the numbers, too, seemed greater than usual. Suspecting the truth he hastily withdrew his troops into camp, and sent men down to the river from which the Romans obtained water, to catch if they could some of the watering parties, and see if they were especially sunburnt, as is generally the case after a long march. He ordered, at the same time, mounted patrols to ride round the consul's camp and observe whether the lines had been extended in any direction, and to notice at the same time whether the bugle-call was sounded once or twice in the camp.<sup>1</sup> They reported that both the camps—M. Livius's camp, and that of L. Porcius—were just as they had been, no addition had been made, and this misled him. But they also informed him that the bugle-call was sounded once in the praetor's camp and twice in the consul's, and this perturbed the veteran commander, familiar as he was with the habits of the Romans. He concluded that both the consuls were there, and was anxiously wondering how the one consul had got away from Hannibal. Least of all could he suspect what had actually occurred, namely, that Hannibal had been so completely outwitted that he did not know the whereabouts of the commander and the army whose camp had been so close to his own. As his brother had not ventured to follow the consul, he felt quite certain that he had sustained a serious defeat, and he felt the gravest apprehensions lest he should have come too late to save a desperate situation. . . . Then again he was convinced that his letter had never reached Hannibal, but had been intercepted by the consul, who then hastened to crush him. Amidst these gloomy forebodings he ordered the camp fires to be extinguished, and gave the signal at the first watch for all the baggage to be collected in silence. The army then left the camp. In the hurry and confusion of the night march the guides, who had not been kept under very close observation, slipped away. . . .

<sup>1</sup> It would be sounded twice if both the consuls were there.



The column deprived of its guides marched on aimlessly across country, and many, worn out by sleeplessness, flung themselves down to rest, those who remained with the standards becoming fewer and fewer. Until daylight showed him his route, Hasdrubal ordered the head of the column to advance cautiously, but finding that owing to the bends and turns of the river he had made little progress, he made arrangements for crossing it as soon as daybreak should show him a convenient place. But he was unable to find one, for the further he marched from the sea, the higher were the banks which confined the stream, and by thus wasting the day he gave his enemy time to follow him.<sup>1</sup>

And there by the river Metaurus he was overtaken, and made ready to fight. He himself took up his position on the right of the line with his Spaniards, opposite to Livius; facing the praetor in the centre were the Ligurian allies who had joined him on his arrival in Italy; on the left, opposite to Nero, the Gauls held an impregnable position. The struggle between Livius and Hasdrubal was stubborn. At the other end of the line Nero found that he could not dislodge the Gauls. The victory, decisive, overwhelming, that people were praying for in Rome, was not yet in sight. Then once again Nero made a daring move. He left a small force in front of the Gauls to keep them quiet, and marched the rest of the right wing rapidly behind the line to the help of Livius on the left, and threw his whole weight on Hasdrubal's flank and rear. The manoeuvre was decisive.

'Thus attacked on every side, front, flank, and rear, Spaniards and Ligurians alike were simply massacred, where they stood. At last the carnage reached the Gauls. Here there was very little fighting, for a great many had fallen out during the night and were lying asleep everywhere in the fields, and those who were still with the standards were worn out by the long march and want of sleep, and being quite unable to stand fatigue could hardly

<sup>1</sup> Livy, book xxvii, cc. 43-7; vol. iv, pp. 125-30.

sustain the weight of their armour. It was now midday, and the heat and thirst made them gasp for breath, until they were cut down or made prisoners without offering any resistance.’<sup>1</sup>

Hasdrubal did all that a general could do and then, when the battle was irretrievably lost, he spurred his horse into the thickest of the enemy and died fighting. The carnage was on the scale of Cannae.

The night after the battle Nero set off for his camp in Apulia, and marching even more rapidly than on the outward journey reached it in six days. He had been away fourteen, and his absence had not been discovered. That fortnight had decided the issue of the war. Nero had brought with him Hasdrubal’s severed head, and on his arrival this was thrown, a brutal message, in front of Hannibal’s outposts, and two prisoners were released to amplify it. Hannibal recognized the doom of Carthage, and withdrew to the fastnesses of Bruttium, where he maintained himself for four more years, none even yet daring to assail him.

To Rome, where the result of the battle had been awaited with an anxiety intensified by memories of Cannae, the news of the overwhelming victory brought unspeakable relief. The consuls were given a splendid triumph. The strain was relaxed. Army and navy were reduced. Farmers returned to the desolate fields. A shadow, a ghost, of the old routine of life returned. Presently the voluntary war loans were repaid, and a little later the twelve defaulting colonies were required to make good what they owed. They had been exempt for six years from military service and taxation, and heavily increased demands were now made upon them. Their protests went unheeded.

The story of the closing years of the war must of necessity be in the nature of an anticlimax. It was to the battle of the Metaurus that, in later days, Rome looked back as to the hour of her deliverance.

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, book xxvii, c. 48; vol. iv, p. 131.

How deep the debt your fathers owed,  
 O Rome, to Nero's race, to Nero's blood!  
 Witness Metaurus' purple flood;  
 Witness that day when through the clouds of night  
 Refulgent burst, a living light,  
 The glorious sun that smiled to see  
 A grateful nation's jubilee—  
 For Hasdrubal lies low, and Rome again is free!

Through the fair fields of Italy once more  
 The people grew: the voice of toil was heard:  
 And where the Punic conqueror  
 So long o'er smoking plains his war-horse spurred  
 Fierce as the flame that wraps the forest trees,  
 Or storms careering o'er Sicilian seas,  
 Once more the Nation's heart awakened stirred,  
 And in the desecrated fane  
 Adoring Rome beheld her banished Gods again.<sup>1</sup>

In the following year (206) Scipio returned from Spain, which the Carthaginians had now abandoned. The people made him consul with the intention that he should invade Africa and command there till the war was over. When the Senate (who never quite trusted him as a general or liked him as a man <sup>2</sup> and who did not want to invade Africa till Hannibal had left Italy) would not give him an adequate force, he appealed for volunteers, and such was his popularity that they flocked to join him. For the first time in the history of Rome there appeared that personal tie between general and soldier that a century later was to undermine the foundations of the Republic, substituting for the name and authority of the Roman people the name and authority of successive masters of the legions—Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Caesar. But Scipio never abused his power.

While still in Spain Scipio had prepared the way for the invasion by cultivating the friendship of the great Numidian chiefs. When he landed unopposed near Utica in the spring of 204, one of them, Masinissa, joined

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Odes*, iv. iv. 37-48 (De Vere).

<sup>2</sup> He was too modern and too fond of Greek literature, and he was impatient of their resistance to all change.

him. He was at the moment a fugitive without a kingdom, and his rival, Syphax, for the price of a noble Carthaginian wife, had thrown in his lot with Carthage. But Masinissa was a man of genius, whether as a leader of Numidian horse or as king of their wild tribes, and a bond was now forged between him and Rome that was to endure for more than fifty years.

At first, Scipio's progress was slow. He could not gain any marked advantage over the combined forces of Syphax and the Carthaginian general Hasdrubal, the son of Gisco. He even toyed—it was no more—with negotiations for a peace. Then when the discipline and vigilance of the enemy had been relaxed he suddenly threw off the mask. One night both their camps were set on fire. The enemy, not suspecting design, and concerned only to fight the flames or to escape from them, were mown down without resistance. But the struggle was not yet abandoned. Help came from Spain and Macedonia, and once more the Carthaginians gave battle to Scipio, only to suffer an overwhelming defeat. Syphax, in his turn a fugitive, was captured by his rival Masinissa, and the native tribes, now sure of the issue of the war, rose joyfully against their hated masters. In her extremity Carthage sent for Hannibal, who still held out in Bruttium hoping against hope that the Macedonians would even yet invade Italy to help him. He obeyed without demur and in 203 embarked at Croton, where transports had been held in readiness for the day which had been so long foreseen.

The terrible Carthaginian had left Italy at last, gone after fifteen years. A fresh tide of rejoicing swept through Rome. Old Fabius, the veteran of the war, the man whose dogged resolution had brought her in safety through the darkest days, was singled out for the highest honour that Senate and citizens could confer. He was decorated with the grass wreath that by old custom was presented by an army to a general who had saved it from a desperate peril. A plain grass wreath. Not lands or

revenues or titles. Just a plain grass wreath. A few months later the old man died.

Meanwhile Hannibal had landed in Africa. In the early days of the war his victories had been as brilliant as those by which the young Napoleon was to sweep the Austrians out of Italy. He was now to meet his Waterloo at Zama. Scipio had beaten the other Carthaginian generals in Spain as Wellington beat Napoleon's marshals, and like Wellington he did not meet his greater rival till the matchless army which he had led from victory to victory had been destroyed by years of ceaseless war. Hannibal knew his weakness. His veterans were comparatively few in number; the Carthaginian militia were raw and unsteady; the splendid Numidian horsemen of Masinissa were arrayed against him. Terms of peace had been discussed with Scipio, and even approved by the Senate, before his arrival, but the Carthaginian Assembly had rejected them. Hannibal now sought to reopen negotiations, and the two generals met. But Scipio, generous though he was, could not offer any easier terms, and it was left for battle to decide the issue. It was fought out near Zama, some eighty miles south-west of Carthage, on the 19th October,<sup>1</sup> 202. At first the fight was evenly contested. Hannibal's veterans in the front line held their own. But when support was needed the militia, who formed the second line, failed them. The veterans believed themselves betrayed, and the two bodies fell upon each other. Hannibal tried to restore the battle, but he was outnumbered and outfought. His old soldiers died where they stood, and the Carthaginian army was annihilated. He did not follow the example set by his brother at the Metaurus: he submitted to live that he might serve his country as a statesman, though as a general he could do no more.

Scipio did not wish to destroy Carthage. His terms were necessarily harder than those offered in the previous year, but under the circumstances they were not un-

<sup>1</sup> The date is fixed by an eclipse of the sun.

reasonable. Spain was to be surrendered: all ships of the Carthage but ten were to be given up: an annual tribute of 100 talents (£48,000) was to be paid for fifty years: Carthage must undertake to wage no war—not even against harassing Numidians—without Rome's permission. The terms were accepted—Carthage had no choice—and peace was concluded early in 201.

Masinissa for his services was confirmed in his own kingdom and received in addition a portion of the lands that had belonged to Syphax. Honoured as 'ally and friend' of the Roman people, he was to be a thorn in the side of Carthage all the days of his long life. The spoils of victory were immense: the Roman treasury was full to overflowing.

The triumph of Scipio followed, the most splendid that the city had yet seen. That day the people hailed him by a style unknown before: henceforth he was Africanus—Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus.

## CHAPTER XIX

### POST-WAR

THE war was over. The long fever of anxiety with its nightmares and its delirium had passed. The patient would live, would regain a deceptive strength, but it would not live the old life. Body and soul were scarred indelibly. Rome, Italy, would never be the same again. The strength of the later empire would be in the provinces, not there. The men who came back to civil life in tens of thousands had been soldiers, and nothing but soldiers, for years. They had forgotten the ways of peace. The traditional routine of the old home life had been broken, and would never be recovered—the reverence towards parents, the daily acts of devotion to the gods, the tireless industry of the husbandman, the plain living, the simple country sports, the instinct of patriotism and selfless unquestioning obedience to the State. All classes were affected in the same way. The old discipline had vanished with the fathers who had given it authority, a sacrifice to the war. Far different now would be the upbringing of Rome's youth. The new generation would never be like the men of old,

a hardy brood  
Trained from their youth to wield the Sabine spade,  
To fetch the fagot from the neighbouring wood  
Obedient to a mother's voice severe,  
What time the sun  
Threw from far-distant hills a lengthened shade,  
Lifting the yoke from the o'er-laboured steer,  
Saying, as sank his orb: 'Rejoice, thy task is done.'<sup>1</sup>

Townships and villages had been blotted out in hundreds by the ravages of war and pestilence, and with

them was blotted out the vigorous self-contained life that had characterized them in the old days, when their inhabitants could satisfy their simple needs by the work of their own hands as in medieval England; could feed themselves with corn and wine and oil<sup>1</sup> of their own raising, and clothe themselves with the wool and leather of their flocks and herds. In the country there was little use for money. Thousands of those who had been bred to country life could never return to it even if they would. Where their forefathers had lived and worked was now a wilderness derelict and uninhabited save by the half-savage slave-herdsmen who roamed the wastes. So they flocked to Rome, loose-living, reckless, idle, demoralized completely by years of camp life in a day when a camp had no care of a man's mind or soul and very little of his body.

And always more land was going out of cultivation. The slave-grown corn pouring into Rome from fertile Sicily as tribute, and sold below cost price by the State to needy citizens to keep them quiet, drove Italian corn off the market. The soil of the upland farms of central Italy was unkindly at best, and there was no longer a livelihood to be won by ploughing or sowing it if a man had need to sell his crops. Enormous tracts of land in those parts of Italy that had gone over to Hannibal—in Campania, Lucania, Samnium, Apulia—had been confiscated and had passed into the possession of the State. That, too, ceased almost entirely to be corn-bearing. The Senate kept it under their own control, and let it out in blocks to the nobles and wealthy men, who converted it into pasture for their sheep and cattle, and who were amassing great estates up and down Italy, like the landowners of eighteenth-century England, by buying out the yeomen who could no longer make a living, and who if they would not sell were often displaced by harsh and illegal measures. The selfish policy which had caused so much suffering and unrest in earlier

<sup>1</sup> Oil takes the place of butter.



centuries was to cause more. The old Licinian Law of 367 B.C.<sup>1</sup> which limited the amount of public land that any single individual might occupy had long been obsolete and disregarded. Another generation, provoked beyond endurance by continued exclusion from the land, would revive it. Meanwhile it was a common saying 'that the beasts had their lairs, but nothing was left to the burgesses save the air and sunshine, and that those who were styled the masters of the world had no longer a clod that they could call their own.'<sup>2</sup>

The other safety-valve which had provided an escape for a congested population in the past, the settlement of colonies on conquered territory to occupy strategic points, ceased to operate after the final reduction of the Gauls and the fortification of the Alpine frontier. The last Roman colony to go out for many a year was sent to Luna in the year 177 to hold the north-west frontier against the Ligurians; the last Latin colony had gone to Aquileia, at the head of the Adriatic, near Venice, six years earlier to guard the north-eastern gate against invasion from beyond the Alps.

So Rome had its unemployment problem like our own post-war world, and for a time she made no real attempt to deal with it. As new citizens with their right to cheap corn had become a burden to the State that no longer needed them as soldiers, the old Latin privilege<sup>3</sup> of migration to Rome was narrowly restricted, and thousands of Latins were expelled from the city and sent back to their own decaying towns—one of a number of harsh measures that bore hardly, not only on the Latins, but on all the Italian allies, to their great discontent. The number of hungry mouths was reduced but there was no more work.

But if the Senate made no real endeavour to find work, it did what it could to relieve the tedium of idleness and

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. iii, p. 79; cf. Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. iii, pp. 132, 133.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 55.

keep the citizens in a good temper. Public holidays became ever more numerous.<sup>1</sup> Games, dramatic performances, gladiatorial shows were provided at enormous cost by candidates for office. Bribery and corruption, always the curse of democracy, whether open and flagrant or concealed and subtle, whether men bid for votes with money or with lavish promises of what they will do if given power, were sapping the vitality of Rome's administration. It became every year more difficult for a poor man to compete in the race for office. Ability ceased to secure recognition save when some dangerous emergency exposed the incompetence of generals whose only qualification was their wealth. Nobody any longer worked who could avoid it. Lounging had become a habit. Cato, as a sour jest, proposed that the Forum should be paved with pointed stones to discourage it. Even the young nobles shirked the obligation to military service, and in 180 a law had to be passed excluding from office all who could not produce evidence that they had served for ten years in the army. It looked as though before long almost the only workers would be slaves.

The old moral laws went out of fashion with the old family discipline. Secret orgies were introduced under the guise of religious mysteries from the East. The canker of divorce was destroying home life. Even in the highest circles poisoners were at work, and a man's last will and testament was no longer safe against the machinations of greedy and unprincipled relations. The Senate, shocked by the excesses, brought some thousands of the offenders to trial and punished most of them by death. But the evil had got beyond control.

The public purse was looked upon as fair prey by all. 'He who steals from a fellow citizen,' said Cato, 'ends his days in chains and fetters: but he who steals from the community ends them in gold and purple.' Office was looked upon almost universally as an opportunity to amass a fortune, and there were so many ways of doing

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that Rome had no Sunday.

it. Though the administration of conquered provinces was still as a rule comparatively just and merciful, or at worst not intolerable in the eyes of those who had known and suffered under the excesses of eastern potentates, it became more and more rare for the unpaid proconsuls and praetors to return home from their year of office with clean hands. And the Senate turned blind eyes to the offences of their colleagues. A Lucius Aemilius Paullus might refuse to touch the money or the spoils of conquered Macedonia; the scrupulous conscience of a Cato might send him travelling his province of Sardinia on foot attended by a single servant lest he should seem to countenance the general abuse of the official right to free quarters and free conveyance, but few generals could be found to imitate the one, few governors to imitate the other. As for the rest they would not miss the golden opportunities the year of office put in their way. Caius Gracchus, whose standard of honour was that of Cato and Aemilius and the great Romans of an earlier day—his sad story will be told in a later chapter—described the common practice. He had been quaestor to the general in Sardinia for three years and he declared that ‘alone of all who went on the expedition, he had carried out a full and brought home an empty purse, while others, after drinking up the wine they had carried out with them, brought back the wine-jars filled again with gold and silver from the war.’<sup>1</sup>

Discipline was collapsing in the armies, and generals who were busy feathering their nests were glad to buy an easy popularity by allowing their men to carry off the plunder that should have gone into the public treasury. Many of the veterans of the legions came home rich men from the campaigns in Macedonia and Asia Minor that followed closely the defeat of Hannibal.

The spoils of the East produced a sudden growth of wealth in Rome. Money had become plentiful where it had been scarce, and there was a general desire to make

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. iii, p. 146.

more. Land had been a man's only capital in the old pre-war days. Now public companies multiplied and their shares were bought and sold in a feverish competition for quick and easy wealth. The unaccustomed riches threw Roman society off its balance. The 'new rich,' as usual, were indifferent to or unconscious of the obligations that wealth imposes on its possessors.

Such was the tone of wide sections of the people, a tone ominous of ill:

Fertile of sin a race accurst  
Defiled the sacred hearth and home:  
From that foul source the tempest burst  
That sapped the strength of Rome.  
The arts depraved of guilty life  
Corrupt the maid: the faithless wife  
Betrays her own, her husband's fame:  
Falsar than all he traffics in her shame!  
Not from such parents spring  
Soldiers like those who drave  
Afric's fierce son o'er the blood-darkened wave—  
Who smote great Pyrrhus and the Syrian King.<sup>1</sup>

There were, of course, many who held the whole thing in abhorrence and tried to stem the evil tide by appeals to old tradition, to education and religion, to the intellect and the moral sense: but though their example was freely praised it was not followed.

While ever more Roman citizens were workless, slaves became more numerous with each year that passed. As in Athens so in Rome they displaced the free labourer—and not only for economic reasons. The landlords liked them better because they could not be called up for military service. There had, of course, been slaves in Italy from time out of mind both in the house and on the land. In the old days they worked side by side with the farmer and lived in or about the house. At the end of the day Cato, as a young man, would take his evening meal with them, eating the same bread and drinking the same thin, common wine. The relationship was not

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Odes*, III. vi. 17-36.

necessarily inhuman, though masters were severe even to small faults. Cato was. Plutarch<sup>1</sup> tells us that 'when he grew richer and made any feasts for his friends and colleagues in office, as soon as supper was over he used to go with a leathern thong and scourge those who waited or dressed the meat carelessly.' Every slave expected to be beaten. 'Woe to my back!' says the slave-cook in the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, when he thinks that he is late with the dinner. It was a joke that always brought a laugh from the audience. The joke was better still if the beating was administered on the stage as it is in the *Pseudolus*. There Plautus brings Ballio, a slave-merchant, on the stage with several male and female slaves, and this is the fashion in which the scene opens:

*Ballio.* Come foorth,<sup>2</sup> come foorth, you lazy clowns, ill-gotten and ill-bought

Of whom not one in well-doing has ever taken thought;  
Whom by this pattern save I prove, no gain is there for gaining;  
[Flogs the men all round.

I've never seen such ass-like men, so rough their ribs with caning;

More hurt have you the more you strike: these whipping-postes wytte<sup>3</sup>

Is thus-wise wise:

When chance afford, take, steal, run off with it;

Plunder, drink, eat, take flight;

This it is is their delyte;

You'd rather choose

Leave wolves with ewes

Than such to guard your right.<sup>3</sup>

Slaves filled every conceivable position in life which would be occupied to-day, not only by the labourers and humbler workers, but by salaried servants, from the university man in the civil service or at the head of a great business or a joint-stock bank down to the humblest clerk or shop assistant. They were confidential secretaries to great men; they were artists, dramatists, architects,

<sup>1</sup> *Lives*, vol. i, p. 536.

<sup>2</sup> Imitating the old unpolished Latin of the third century B.C.

<sup>3</sup> *Pseudolus*, i. ii. 133 sqq. Translation by Rogers and Harley in *Roman Home Life and Religion*, p. 134.

schoolmasters, shopkeepers, craftsmen, domestic servants of every grade—and there were many in a Roman house, each trained for his own special task; they were farm-labourers, herdsmen, miners, galley-slaves. In Rome alone in the first century B.C. there were at least 200,000 of them. The price paid for them varied widely. There were boy-favourites who cost a thousand pounds, and there were half-savage herdsmen who could be bought for a pound or two. Many might be their masters' friends, treated affectionately, freed, enriched. So Cicero treated his secretary and amanuensis Tiro, 'who, by means of a sort of shorthand which he invented, could keep pace while his master dictated, or, if need were, decipher his handwriting when the ordinary copyists were at fault, his critic who could correct slips of the pen or of memory; the constant aid in all his literary work.'<sup>1</sup> When the two were returning in 50 B.C. from Cicero's province of Cilicia, Tiro fell ill at Patrae, the port at the entrance of the Gulf of Corinth, and had to be left behind while his master went on to Rome, sending back anxious letters to tell him how much he missed him, but bidding him the while not to think of undertaking the sea voyage until he had completely recovered his strength. He has arranged, he says, with the local banker that he is to have all the money he needs, and recommends him to make a present to the doctor—himself perhaps a slave—'to render him the more attentive.' In another long letter he gives him all the political news of the day, and 'take care of your health,' he ends, 'and write to me at every opportunity.'

Too many of the citizens of imperial Rome were the sons of slaves, men and women from all parts of the Mediterranean world, of every social grade and type of upbringing, from the highest to the lowest. Well might Scipio Aemilianus call them in contempt stepsons of Italy, and remind them of their chains when the mob in the Forum raised the cry against him. But if they were

<sup>1</sup> Strachan-Davidson, *Cicero*, p. 312.

stepsons, and were but poor substitutes for the farmers and craftsmen whom they had displaced, there were some among them who did honour to their stepmother. The father of the poet Horace was a freedman who could afford to send his son to study at the university at Athens. Caecilius, the comic poet, who died in 168 B.C., was an Insubrian Gaul who had been carried off as a slave from the Po valley. Terence (196-159) came to Rome as a little slave-boy from Africa, and became the friend of Scipio Aemilianus and his circle, to whom he read his plays. In later days the civil service of the Empire was largely in the hands of freedmen.

But apart from these more fortunate ones the slave in Rome often lived a life that, if he must be a slave, was not unendurable. He could earn money and it was common for him to buy or be given his freedom, and then he became a Roman citizen. But it was a distorted life at best. It began in an agony of sorrow and indignity. Uprooted violently from all the happy formative associations of home and native land; fawning, dodging, universally expected to be a thief and liar without a conscience, most often he became the thing men thought him.

This was slave life at its best. At its worst it was unrelievedly inhuman—the life of a beast, and a beast treated with a cruelty that to us is unimaginable. In Sicily and in some parts of Italy the cultivated lands were worked on the Carthaginian plan, which the Romans found in Sicily and copied, by gangs of unfortunates with shackles on their legs who were locked away at night in terrible prisons, often underground. They might not even breed their kind. It was cheaper to wear them out and replace them by new purchases. 'It is very possible that, compared with the sufferings of the Roman slaves, the sum of all Negro suffering is but a drop.'<sup>1</sup> No wonder that parties of desperate runaways roamed the countryside ready for any act of violence, or that the slaves of

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. iii, p. 76, writing before slavery was abolished.

Sicily revolted in 135 B.C. For four years they held the open country, desperately resisting the troops who were sent against them, and when at last the rebellion was put down 20,000 prisoners were crucified for a terrible example. In Italy the wild half-naked herdsmen on the ranches were the terror of the traveller. There is a story that when such men prayed of their masters clothes to cover them, they were met with the suggestive question, Did then all the travellers who passed their way go naked?

Slaves poured into Italy from every area of war. After the revolt of the Gauls in the Po valley had been crushed in 193 the operations degenerated into a slave-hunt, and 'nothing remained of the nation of the Boii but old men and children.'<sup>1</sup> A revolt of the Sardinians a few years later ended in the same way. Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, the father of the famous Gracchi, a man, for a Roman, not inhumane, suppressed it with such ferocity that 80,000 of the inhabitants were slain or captured, and 'cheap as a Sardinian' became a proverb in Rome. The same kind of thing was going on in Asia Minor, and where there was no war in progress to supply the markets professional slave-hunters were at work. The great slave-market of the East was held in the Aegean island of Delos, to-day desolate and uninhabited. There in the second century B.C. the Italian slave-merchants met the dealers of Asia Minor, and as many as 10,000 slaves would be disembarked and sold in a single day.

The Roman was a hard man at best, and he became harder now than ever. Conquered peoples upon occasion were treated with appalling cruelty. Human life had no sanctity for him. His nature was brutalized. For his very entertainment blood must flow. Dramatic performances were far too tame for him. Terence had to complain that the performance of one of his plays was ruined because the audience wanted the tight-rope dancers who were advertised to follow it, and on another occasion

<sup>1</sup>Ib., vol. ii, p. 184.



the theatre emptied on a rumour that there were gladiators to be seen elsewhere. The audience who heard the first Greek flute-players perform in 167 found no pleasure in the new music. They were bored at once, and only recovered interest when the manager compelled the unfortunate artists to set about each other with their fists. That was the taste of Roman audiences. Delight in cruelty was no disgrace: rather it was regarded as a characteristic and honourable trait in conquering peoples. From very early days wild beasts had been killed on holidays for their entertainment. In that perhaps they were not alone. But only the Roman ever thought of exhibiting trained gladiators to fight and kill one another as a spectacle. It was his unique contribution to the list of public entertainments.

It is a dark picture: the national industry decaying and the land going out of cultivation; the population declining in numbers and in quality; unemployment on an immense scale, permanent, incurable; a city proletariat idle, cruel, corrupt; the brooding peril of an immense slave population; armies without discipline; a succession of incompetent self-seeking commanders foisted into position by their wealth and changed each year; a Senate selfish and reactionary; an Assembly irresponsible, untrained, veering like a weathercock to its own momentary passions, fears, desires, a perfect instrument for demagogues to play upon; allies in Italy disillusioned and embittered; a growing empire, but no adequate machinery for its administration or defence; and presently gathering ominously below the horizon northward the storm of barbarian invasion. Surely the peril of Rome was great; and if Rome fell the whole fabric of civilization would collapse with her. Would she find the way to her salvation before it was too late?

## CHAPTER XX

### EASTERN CONQUESTS

WITHIN fifty years of Zama—less than the space of a single lifetime—Rome had gathered about her a great empire, an empire unwanted, that she had done her utmost to avoid. She had fought her way to mastery in Italy, not of set purpose, but by shouldering aside one after another jealous rivals who would have forced her back within old narrow boundaries. Carthage, it is true, she had fought for the possession of Sicily and Sardinia, but she had inherited from the Greek South the feud of centuries, and the islands belong geographically to the peninsula: there could be no safety if a rival held them. Spain she had entered because Hannibal had made it—the maritime fringe of it on south and east—his base for the invasion of Italy, and she was forced in self-defence to seize and hold it. From the first it was a burden. It was perpetually in revolt, and the soldiers hated service there, for it was dangerous and exacting. They were still a militia who wanted to return to home duties as soon as might be, but for the legions stationed in Spain there was little hope of quick discharge, and there was not much booty to be won by way of recompense for the long detention. But the burden was one that could not be dropped.

If Rome had wanted empire she would have annexed Carthage and her African dominions after Zama, but she did not. Quite certainly in 200 B.C. she wanted nothing more than peace. The second Macedonian war which broke out in that year was undertaken most reluctantly as a measure of defence to avert the greater danger of a new invasion.

The empire of Alexander had been parted after his death between his generals, and the descendants of three of them, still jealous rivals, now occupied the thrones of Macedonia, Syria, and Egypt. Each played for his own hand. Egypt, by virtue of her sea power the overlord of most of the Greek cities of Asia Minor, was now passing through a period of extreme weakness under a boy king, and her two rivals, for the moment allies, were competing for the possession of provinces which she had not the strength to hold. Macedonia had long been dominant in Greece, and Philip V was now adding the Greek cities in Asia Minor to his dominions, while Antiochus of Syria, who also had his eye on them, was busy occupying Palestine, of which Egypt for a century had been overlord. The great and prosperous island of Rhodes with its wide possessions in Caria on the mainland, powerful Byzantium on the Bosphorus, and King Attalus of Pergamus in the north-west of Asia Minor, Rome's faithful ally, watched Philip's progress with alarm. His ambition was boundless, and his methods were ruthless. He had just shocked all Greece by his treatment of the Greek city of Cius on the Sea of Marmora. When it refused to submit to him he utterly destroyed it and sold the entire population into slavery. But Greece was powerless, for the three great key-fortresses, Demetrias in Magnesia, Chalcis in Euboea, and Corinth, were in Philip's hands. 'The fetters of Greece' he called them, and when Greece murmured he jangled the fetters and set his Acarnanian allies in motion against Athens. For there were always Greek states that would side with the Macedonian to win an advantage over fellow Hellenes whom they hated more.

Philip, who came to the throne in 220 at the age of eighteen, had entered into alliance with Hannibal soon after Cannae. Rome's meddling in Illyria,<sup>1</sup> her occupation of Corcyra, Epidamnus, and Apollonia, and the encouragement she gave to the anti-Macedonian faction

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 119.

in Greece, were reason enough. From 215 to 205 he had been nominally at war with Rome, but he had never pressed her hard. An all-conquering Hannibal might be even more dangerous as a neighbour across the Adriatic than an all-conquering Rome. Let the two fight on till both were exhausted. A stalemate would suit Philip best. Then one day Italy, the prize that Pyrrhus grasped at but could not reach, might fall to him, for he was far more powerful than ever Pyrrhus had been.

That at any rate was the Senate's reading of Philip's character and purpose. They dared not sit still while he was besieging Pergamus, and the Acarnanians at his bidding were laying waste Attica to the walls of Athens. So they invited the Assembly to declare war on him, but the Assembly at first refused. They had had enough of war, and service oversea was onerous and hateful. The tribunes, too, revived, quite unjustly, the old charge that the nobles only wanted it for their own selfish ends, and the citizens believed them. The Senate thereupon sent the consul to reason with the Assembly. He told them that the choice before them was not whether they would have war or peace, but whether they would fight their enemy in Macedonia or meet him like Pyrrhus and Hannibal in Italy. The argument was irresistible and the Assembly reversed their vote: but they bargained that the citizens should be relieved of much of the irksome garrison duty that was now perpetual, and that the consuls should enlist only volunteers for the Macedonian war. The unpopular garrison duty could be put on the Italian allies. Was not the Roman master? The Senate accepted the conditions, unwise though it was to treat the allies so openly as inferiors. They had grievances enough already. The volunteers, however, did not come forward, and the enforced enrolment which became necessary led later to a dangerous mutiny in the base camp at Apollonia.

Hostilities began in the late autumn of 200, but the early campaigns were mismanaged—it was Rome's habit.

To train the new troops and convert them into an efficient fighting machine took time. Not until the summer of 198 was any substantial progress made. Then the command was assumed by the consul, Titus Quinctius Flaminius, who was not only an able soldier and diplomatist but also a refined and cultured gentleman, devoted like Scipio to the new learning that had been filtering into Italy from Greece for the past two or three generations, and that the closer contact with the country was now diffusing rapidly. Hellas had thrown her spell about him, and it was the desire of his heart to see her united and free from all foreign domination. His early successes brought over the Achæan League, the strongest power in the Peloponnese, and the Epirotes to the Roman side. The wild half-barbarous Aetolians were already Philip's enemies—Aetolia and Acarnania would never act together—and when Flaminius overthrew the king at the decisive battle of Cynoscephalæ in Thessaly in 197 resistance ended. It was for Rome to dictate the terms of peace. The Aetolians, who boasted that it was really they who had won the recent battle—their cavalry had behaved gallantly at a critical moment—wanted to wipe Macedonia off the map, but they were told to their disgust that it was Rome's custom to spare the conquered, and Flaminius treated the beaten king with chivalrous respect—a way of dealing with beaten enemies that Aetolians did not understand.

But Rome's terms were necessarily severe. Macedonia was treated much as Carthage had been treated. Philip had to give up all his conquests, all that he held in Greece and the islands, in Thrace, in Asia Minor. He might not enter into alliances or make war. His army was reduced to insignificance: his ships were surrendered: a war indemnity was laid upon him: hostages were given—among them Demetrius, his second son.

It remained to redistribute the liberated territory. Rome wanted nothing for herself. It seemed hardly credible. The disappointed Aetolians went about saying

that it was not true; that Greece had only got another master, and that the old fetters would be riveted on her more tightly by a stronger hand. But the Senate meant what they had said. Flaminius attended the Isthmian Games at Corinth in the summer of 196, and there he read to cheering crowds the decree conferring freedom upon Hellas.

But it was too late. The Greeks could not be taught to live in peace as a united people. Flaminius spent two disappointing years trying without success to teach them. The cities that had been freed were assigned to one or other of the confederacies that divided the country between them, but those confederacies were fiercely jealous of one another, suspicious, unappeasable. The Achaean League got much, the Aetolians little—to their great disgust. A war between Sparta and the Achaeans had to be ended and a settlement made, but it pleased nobody. The irresponsible democracies were torn with dissensions: there were pro-Roman parties and anti-Roman parties: there were feuds: there were murders. However, in 194 it was at last possible to withdraw the Roman garrisons from Demetrias, Chalcis, and Corinth, and Flaminius, after urging the Greeks, who had assembled at Corinth for the leave-taking, to show themselves worthy of their new liberty, left for home accompanied by 1,200 happy Italians whom the Greek cities had redeemed from slavery at his request—the only gift he would accept.

But already another enemy had appeared, and another war was inevitable. Antiochus, misnamed the Great, the King of Syria, though Philip's ally, had given him no help. The troubles of the Macedonian were his opportunity, and he had invaded Asia Minor to seize the coveted prizes that Philip had been obliged to drop. Already he had made himself master of the Greek cities there, and in 196 he crossed the Hellespont into Europe. Flaminius bade him evacuate the cities and warned him to keep out of Europe. For the moment he withdrew:

affairs in Egypt required his presence. But he was quickly back again with ambition heightened and purpose strengthened by the counsels of Rome's greatest enemy. For Hannibal was by his side, an exile now but still absorbed in his life's mission of revenge. Here in the East he had seen his opportunity. Rome's hands were very full. Already Spain was in revolt: the Aetolians were openly boasting that they would soon be in Italy: Sparta had reopened hostilities in the Peloponnese, and all the enemies of Rome were counting on Philip to join them. It was not difficult for Hannibal to persuade Antiochus that he, too, had such an opportunity as might never come again of lowering the pride of these western upstarts who were presuming to give orders to the ancient peoples and great monarchs of the East.

Hannibal had set himself after Zama to reorganize the government of Carthage. The old oligarchy was overthrown and a democratic government was substituted for it. His genius manifested itself as brilliantly in peace as in war. Trade revived, the revenue grew, and when the greedy fingers of the oligarchs were kept out of the treasury, and the public moneys were applied solely to the service of the State, they proved sufficient for all demands. Even the heavy war indemnity was paid without the imposition of direct taxation. But the old families of Carthage could not endure to see their city prosper under his leadership. They denounced him repeatedly to Rome until at last the Senate took alarm, and, in spite of Scipio's generous protest, called on Carthage in 195 to give him up to them, whereupon he left the country secretly and took refuge with Antiochus at Ephesus.

Never yet had Eastern armies stood before the disciplined valour of the West. Of them the Senate had no fear, or of Antiochus. But Hannibal at Ephesus made even Antiochus and his Syrians formidable. Inspired by him, the king's agents appeared everywhere seeking to create a general combination against Rome. They

had even gone to Carthage, so Masinissa had reported. War was inevitable, but Rome did not make the first move. It was made by the discontented 'Aetolians. They had gained nothing by the Roman settlement of Greece. They wanted no freedom that prevented them from imposing their yoke on others, so they seized Demetrius, attacked Sparta, and invited Antiochus to come and 'liberate' the country once again. The king landed in Greece in the autumn of 192 with a small army expecting the Macedonians to join him, but he had failed Philip in his need and Philip stood by Rome. In 191 the legions crossed to Apollonia and the war began. Antiochus occupied the famous pass of Thermopylae, but the position was turned as it was turned by Xerxes when the Spartans held it. A detachment led by Cato descending from the mountains took the Syrian army by surprise and destroyed it. The king escaped with a mere handful and the Greek states that had joined him hastened to make their peace with Rome.

To teach Antiochus his lesson, and again without any purpose of annexing territory, the Romans now prepared to invade Asia Minor. The great Africanus persuaded the Senate to give the command to his incompetent brother, Lucius Scipio, by promising to go with him as his second-in-command. His name brought many of his old soldiers to the recruiting officers: others were tempted by the prospect of looting Asia Minor. The spoils of Macedonia had been prodigious: those of Asia Minor would be many times more splendid and the victory far easier to win. At the battle of Magnesia, not far from Smyrna, the Orientals outnumbered the Romans and their allies by two to one, but numbers availed them nothing.<sup>1</sup> The cavalry and light troops sufficed to break the Syrian phalanx and the whole army took to flight. The legions were never engaged. The Roman losses were insignificant, and Asia Minor was the prize of victory. Antiochus had lost half his

<sup>1</sup> It was the same at Marathon and at Plassey.



kingdom, but he submitted with a jest. He was grateful to the Romans, he said, for saving him the trouble of governing too large an empire. Syria never needed a second lesson.

Again Rome claimed nothing for herself. Greek cities were freed. King Eumenes of Pergamus, who had played a gallant part in the battle of Magnesia, received great additions of territory. He was to be to Philip what Masinissa was to Carthage. The Rhodians got Lycia and part of Caria. But Philip, who had expected a generous reward for his loyal service, got little, and was a disappointed and embittered man. The Achaean League was disappointed, too. The Romans were finding to their disgust that no matter what they did for Greece—and they had just saved her from Syria and the Aetolians—they could never please her. Nothing, it seemed, could heal the divisions or restrain the anarchy that had been her ruin. And the Greeks would talk for ever. They confused and obscured every issue in a cloud of words, and were wilfully blind alike to the power of Rome and to the transparent honesty of her intentions. The demagogues in the assemblies of the petty states aimed clever taunts at her and delighted to defeat the stolid soldiers in futile wars of words. Their 'patriots' only asked of liberty an opportunity to destroy the independence of their hereditary enemies, and professed surprise and indignation when Rome took the larger view and would have all Hellas free and not merely the Achaean League. They had asked no questions about Capua, they said, when Rome took vengeance: why then should Rome intervene to protect the Messenians, who refused to enter the Achaean League, from the Achaean army that would force them to do so? Futile chatterers! They were like the flies upon the wheel that thought they moved it.

There was more fighting both in Greece and Asia in the following year (189). The Aetolians, who had brought Antiochus to Greece, had been admitted to an armistice

after the battle at Thermopylae, but they had taken up arms again on a rumour that the Romans were in difficulties in Asia Minor and they now met with heavy chastisement and lost their independence.

Meanwhile the new consul, Lucius Manlius Volso, succeeded Scipio in Asia Minor. He had looked to make a fortune, but he found to his disgust that the war was over. However, he was a man of resource. He could make a war of his own and gather his plunder before any one could stop him. It is true that he ran the risk of prosecution for the outrage at the end of his term of office, but money was already powerful at Rome and he was prepared to run it. For enemy he selected the Celts of Galatia. Since their arrival a century earlier they had been the terror of their neighbours. Their accumulated booty was enormous. It was no doubt true that there would be neither security nor peace in Asia Minor while they were unsubdued. But they had not offended Rome, and if they had, only the Senate and people of Rome could give the word for war. No consul had ever yet set an army in motion on his sole authority. Volso, however, now marched upon the Celts, destroyed their army and reaped an enormous and disgraceful booty. No prosecution followed: in spite of protests he was actually allowed a triumph. It was an evil precedent, for his example would be freely followed in the years to come when it was usual for men to play for their own hands without thought for the interests of the State. And of course the common soldiers were quick enough to follow such a lead. They had been taught to think that they had a right to plunder, and when Lucius Aemilius Paullus, a Roman of the old school, who himself touched nothing,<sup>1</sup> insisted after the battle of Pydna in 168 that the troops should follow his austere example and leave the spoil, as old custom required, to the State, the unpopularity that he incurred nearly robbed him of the triumph he had earned.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 86.

When the first thought of armies is for plunder, discipline goes. For the next two or three generations the Roman armies ceased to be invincible, and they won an evil name for outrages of every kind upon enemies, allies, and subjects alike. Only men of exceptional character could control them, and few such men rose to the consulship. Nor was it only the discipline of the army that suffered for, says Livy,<sup>1</sup> 'it was through the army serving in Asia that the beginnings of foreign luxury were introduced into the City.' Under its influence the character of the Roman nobility swiftly deteriorated. A selfish greed became their guiding motive. They would do anything for money. Honour, duty, patriotism lost their old appeal.

For the moment, however, Rome's enemies were impotent. Nations and kings were prostrate before her. Yet still she feared one man for his genius and his indomitable spirit—the wanderer Hannibal. While he lived and was at large she would never feel safe. As Europe feared Napoleon, Rome feared him. When peace was made with Antiochus the king had bound himself to give him up a prisoner, but Hannibal escaped and finally reached Bithynia by the Propontis,<sup>2</sup> where he put his genius at the service of its delighted king in his petty wars, and blessed his arms with victory like a god. But as soon as Rome had news of him, pressure was put upon the king to make an end of him. This time escape was impossible and he took the poison that he always carried with him, dying in the year 183 at the age of 67.

<sup>1</sup> Book xxxix, c. 6; vol. v, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> The Sea of Marmora

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE BURDEN OF EMPIRE

THOUGH Rome was everywhere victorious she had no wish to take upon her the burden of empire. Greece she left free because a romantic admiration of everything Hellenic—an admiration that was blind to hard facts—would have it so; Macedonia and the East because she would be rid of the task of administering distant provinces. The Senate knew well what would be the difficulty of governing and defending an empire that would stretch eastward to the Euphrates. Their experience in Spain and Sicily and Sardinia had been enough to teach them that. Rome had as yet no civil service: she had still to learn from Egypt how to organize and man it. The quaestors who served as treasurers and accountants with generals and governors were young politicians at the beginning of their careers, and previous business or financial experience was not expected as a qualification for the office. There were no competent servants of the State who could be sent abroad to attend to the daily routine work of administration, no legal officials, no revenue officers, no accountants. Except in more fortunate Sicily and Spain, where a fixed annual tribute was collected by the provincials themselves, the task of gathering in the taxes was farmed out to public companies who contracted to pay a fixed sum to the treasury, and had the difference for their profit. It was a system that lent itself to every conceivable abuse. The members of the companies, the detested *publicani*—the publicans of the New Testament—and their agents acted too often, as licensed robbers, and the provinces groaned for years

under their exactions till Mithradates, King of Pontus, headed a great uprising and took a terrible revenge. And the system of sending out annually appointed officers with their personal staffs to command an army of occupation or to govern was thoroughly unsatisfactory. How unsatisfactory perhaps had not yet been fully realized. The single year of office gave governors little opportunity of acquiring the necessary knowledge of the country and the people. Nor was there much inducement to try to acquire it, seeing that as soon as a man had begun to take an interest in his charge he was called away from it. Continuity of administration was impossible. Yet to lengthen the term of office would run counter to the whole principle of republican government. It would stop the flow of promotion, and it would give great soldiers and administrators too much power.

The effect was demoralizing. The unpaid proconsuls and propraetors exercised for a year an authority that was almost royal, and most of them found the temptation to use the opportunity to enrich themselves irresistible. Men of all ranks resorted to them daily with their petitions, and petitioners in the East had been taught for many centuries not to come with empty hands. Gifts, bribes, flowed in upon them. The sudden access to undreamed-of wealth threw them off their balance. They were no longer contented to be poor like the great men of old.

The Senate hoped against hope that Greece would settle down quietly and cease to give trouble. But Philip—would he keep quiet? His neighbours were encouraged to watch him. East of him was Rome's good ally, King Eumenes of Pergamus, whose kingdom had been enlarged: west was Aetolia: south was Greece. All had lively memories of Macedonian oppression. South of Asia Minor, Rhodes, another good ally, was strong enough to hold its own: in the north, King Prusias of Bithynia, the executioner of Hannibal, a enemy of Pergamus, was deferential and obedient. Byzantium, rich and strong like Rhodes, had ever-

to gain by peace. Syria was not likely to interfere again in Asia Minor. It was a system of checks and balances. But the balance was precarious: a very little would upset it. The uncertain elements were Greece and Macedonia and both disappointed Roman hopes. For the Senate had not foreseen the lengths to which Philip's pride and resentment would carry him. He had stood by Rome in the war with Antiochus not for any love of the Romans, but because at the moment he hated still more the Syrian who had failed him in his need. He felt that Rome had used him and then denied him his reward, and he burned for revenge. But he could not fight yet. He must plan and work for a distant day. Quietly, patiently he set about the slow task of building up his country's strength. Like modern dictators he encouraged his people to marry young and have many children to fill the gaps that war had made in the ranks of his army. And the people were of one mind with him. Vigorous and warlike, devoted to their kings and very proud of the world-wide fame of their great achievements, they felt keenly the indignity of defeat and subjection.

But of course Philip could not hide his purpose and his preparations from Eumenes and the Greek confederacies, and they carried tales of him to the Senate that brought down upon him censure and correction, which exasperated him still more. By 183 war seemed inevitable, but the Senate allowed Demetrius, his second son, who had been a hostage at Rome and was devotedly pro-Roman, to effect a reconciliation. But the favour they showed Demetrius excited the jealousy and suspicion of Perseus, the elder son, who feared that he would be excluded from the succession to the throne in his brother's favour. He accused him to Philip of treasonable negotiations with Rome and produced forged letters to support the accusation. Philip believed it and had Demetrius put to death, but he quickly discovered that he had been tricked, and died a broken-hearted man two years later. Perseus became king and, taking up his father's purpose

of revenge, began to foster discontent in Greece, organize alliances, and fill his war chest. By this time many of the Greeks were on his side. The Roman idea of freedom was not theirs. They would rather be bullied and oppressed by Macedonia if only they might be free to indulge their pygmy feuds and bully and oppress in turn. The constant disorder had paralysed business and destroyed credit, and the country was full of broken men and debtors, men workless and hopeless, who were ready to shout for Macedonia and the revolution, or for anything else that might seem to promise them an escape from their miseries. Even Rhodes and Byzantium now leaned to Perseus rather than to Rome.

Then Eumenes, who had been to Italy to tell the Senate what was going on, was beset and nearly murdered at Delphi on the way home, and the Romans, convinced at last that Perseus intended to assert his independence and make himself master of Greece, declared war on him in 172. Once more the early campaigns were mismanaged. Commanders were incapable and unprincipled. There was no discipline in the armies. Men could purchase leave and even their discharge, and the officers pocketed the money. The legions were never up to strength. Contributions were levied illegally on the allied states, and officers and men alike plundered the people as though they had been enemies. Those who threatened to appeal to Rome were executed out of hand or sold into slavery. There were grave defeats and the game was in Perseus's hands if he had only shown the dash and resolution of his father, and could have brought himself to open his treasure chests for the hire of allies, the Greeks among them, who were only waiting for his gold, but would do nothing till they had it. But he was a miser and he lost his chance, and with it gold and kingdom. For at last in 168 the Roman people were persuaded to choose for consul the man who stood out above all others as an able commander and an honest man, qualifications that were rarely looked for now in the politician-generals.

This was Lucius Aemilius Paullus, a son of the consul who fell at Cannae, a patrician, and 'one of the few Romans of that age to whom one could not offer money.' At once he set about restoring discipline. 'On taking command of the forces in Macedonia,' says Plutarch,<sup>1</sup> 'and finding them talkative and impertinently busy, as though they were all commanders, [he] issued out his orders that they should have only ready hands and keen swords, and leave the rest to him.' A fortnight after his arrival he gave battle at Pydna, where he defeated Perseus with great slaughter. The king surrendered with his family and was taken to Italy, where he died a few years later: the leading men of Macedonia were deported with him.

Macedonia was now broken up into four self-governing republics, isolated from each other like the Latin cities of old. Trade between them was prohibited, and their inhabitants might not intermarry or own land in more than one. The people were disarmed and were required to pay a tax to Rome, though it was but half of what they had paid the king. In the following year the Roman citizen was relieved of all direct taxation. But the full provincial administration was not set up yet, and there were still to be risings under pretenders who claimed to be members of the royal house.

And now Rome's attitude towards the client states of Pergamus and Rhodes underwent a change. The Senate only showed gratitude so long as it paid them to do so. They rarely indulged a generous sentiment for its own sake. A cold self-interest was their only guide and they expected others to be as calculating as they were themselves. They took it for granted that Eumenes and the Rhodians, no longer needing Rome's protection now that Macedonia had ceased to be a danger, would weary of dependence. They had become possible enemies and had better be treated as such. Quarrels were picked with both on trumped-up pretexts, and to their horror and bewilderment they were stripped ruthlessly of power

<sup>1</sup>*Lives*, vol. iii, p. 477 (*Life of Galba*).



and freedom. Their appeals were unheeded. Eumenes might come no more to Rome.

While Rome was engaged with Macedonia, Antiochus IV of Syria, who had assumed the resounding title of 'the God, the brilliant bringer of victory'—his father had only claimed to be 'the Great'—seized the opportunity to make war on Egypt. But Egypt was under Roman protection, and the Senate at once took steps to deal with the Syrian invasion. They sent no army. It was not needed. They just sent one Caius Popilius, a former consul of harsh forbidding manner, to bid the king quit Egypt and restore his conquests. Antiochus asked for time to consider his reply, but Popilius with his staff drew a circle round him in the sand and told him he must make up his mind before he left it; whereupon he agreed to go all ungodlike, without victory, and marched his army home again.

Greece had given Perseus no armed help because he would not pay for it, but the Senate knew that there had been an active Macedonian party in every city, and they had their names. The pro-Roman party wanted their blood, and there were many executions, but Rome to their disgust was more merciful than they and put a limit. A thousand of the Achæan patriots, Polybius the historian among them, were sent to Italy and interned there; Polybius in the house of Paullus as friend and tutor of his two sons, the rest in Etruscan prisons.

But the settlement of 168 did not endure. There was trouble again in Macedonia. A pretender appeared, claiming to be Perseus's son Philip, who had died in Italy. The rising took the Romans by surprise. They had no troops at hand and were obliged to call out the Achæan militia to cover Thessaly and the road to Greece: and when a legion did appear and battle was joined, the little Roman army suffered a ruinous defeat. In 148, however, an adequate force was sent, and the rising was put down. The four republics were abolished, and the reunited Macedonia now became a Roman province.

Already trouble was brewing in Greece, too. The Senate in 150 had permitted the return of the surviving remnant—a mere 300—of the Achæan exiles who had been deported to Italy seventeen years before. But seventeen years of prison life in Italy had taught them nothing. They had still to learn the futility of resisting Rome. Polybius knew it and counselled submission, but they would not heed him. The Achæans had been thrown off their balance by the fact that the Romans—so it seemed—had not been able to put down the Macedonian rising without their help, and they now deliberately picked a quarrel with them. The old dispute with Sparta provided the occasion. The Achæans attacked the weaker Spartans, and when a Roman commission appeared at Corinth to hear both sides, and decided in Sparta's favour, the Achæan deputies refused to hear them out and raised the mob against them. The commissioners complained to Rome, but still the Senate were patient and forbearing. The Achæans, however, at once attributed their patience to fear. They knew that the Romans were having trouble both in Spain and at Carthage, and persuaded themselves that all the subject countries were about to rise against them. In this mood of boastful self-confidence they treated the Roman envoys, when once more they appeared at Corinth, with an uproarious discourtesy reminiscent of the follies of Tarentum. They would have war. But they were not Carthaginians or Spaniards. As soon as the Roman legions came down the warlike spirit waned. The great talkers only ran away, and when the consul Lucius Mummius presented himself with his army before Corinth, the impregnable, he occupied it without a blow.

Rome now committed an unpardonable crime. By decree of the Senate, Corinth, the first commercial city in the land, the centre of a vast trade, was utterly destroyed, and its inhabitants were either killed or sold as slaves. None could say that its continued existence threatened any danger to the peace or security of Rome. The only

motive for its destruction was the desire of the Roman merchants and bankers to rid themselves of a rival, and so divert into their own hands the whole of the great business that it had conducted. In the same year Carthage, still more wealthy, still more famous, suffered the same fate. But though that city was an even more formidable rival than Corinth in the markets of the Mediterranean, and the Roman merchants and bankers for their own purposes swelled the cry for her destruction, there can be no doubt that many of the statesmen and soldiers of Rome believed with Cato that Italy would never be safe while Carthage stood. She was too rich, too powerful, and she had rearmed. It was only reasonable to believe that when opportunity offered she would fight again. The rebuilding of either city was forbidden by a solemn curse for ever. Delos took the place of Corinth, and Utica of Carthage.

For the war which ended the liberty of Hellas Rome was not to blame. In all their dealings with the Greeks the Senate had for once allowed sentiment to oust self-interest as a motive, and they showed a forbearance that they showed towards no other people. The Greeks themselves confessed that by their own acts they had forfeited their independence, and that they had, at least, been saved from the utter ruin, social and economic, that their incurable anarchy was fast bringing down upon them. Athens and Sparta and a few other cities of immortal fame were singled out to be treated with a distinguished consideration. They had the name of allies and they paid Rome no tax.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE THIRD CARTHAGINIAN WAR

IN the year 150, Cato, at the age of eighty-four, was sent to Carthage at the head of a commission to arbitrate between the City and Masinissa the Numidian king, now nearly ninety. He returned persuaded that Rome would never be safe till the rival city had been utterly destroyed. From that day forward he made no speech in the Senate, no matter what the subject that was being debated, but he ended it with the words: *delenda est Carthago*—Carthage must be destroyed.

For the recovery of Carthage had been amazing. On that site a trader-city could not but be wealthy. The Senate had hoped that by the treaty which closed the second war they had put an end to its military power for ever. Masinissa had been encouraged to insult and annoy, but Carthage might never fight, not even in self-defence, without Rome's permission, which Rome, of course, would never give. One province had already been seized by the Numidians and another was now threatened. The Carthaginian government was once more in the hands of the oligarchical party, the old families and the wealthy merchants. The dread of Rome was deep in their hearts: they feared for their possessions. They dared not strike at Masinissa. Always they preached patience. But the temper of the populace was rising. Something must be done. So the government appealed to the Senate to hear their cause, and either do them right or give them leave to fight out their quarrel with the king. But the Senate only procrastinated. At last the patience of the people was exhausted. They expelled the oligarchs from power and drove them from the city, and the new govern-

ment resolved to dare everything and force the dispute with Masinissa to an issue. It was at this point that the Senate sent Cato and his fellow commissioners to Africa with full powers to settle it. On their arrival the commission offered to arbitrate between the parties, and Masinissa at once agreed to be bound by their decision, knowing well which way it would go; but the Carthaginians refused unless the commissioners would investigate the question of right thoroughly before deciding. But Cato had seen and heard enough. The city had re-armed. Whether the Carthaginians or Masinissa had a province more or less was beside the point. There was no room in a Roman world for a rival so wealthy, so powerful, and so dangerously near—not three days' sail away. *Delenda est Carthago*. And all the merchants and financiers of Rome were on his side.

The patriotic party in Carthage raised an army and made ready to fight Masinissa, but the wily Numidian now sat still. Rome would see him safe. The Senate pretended to believe that the army was being raised against them, and demanded that it should be disbanded forthwith and that all weapons of war and all the accumulated naval and military stores should be destroyed. But feeling ran too high in Carthage, and the government, though alive to the peril of refusal, dared not obey. The military preparations were hurried on, and then at last Masinissa struck. In the battle that ensued the Carthaginian army, led by one of the usual incapables, another Hasdrubal, was annihilated. Carthage had violated the treaty, and the Senate had the pretext for a declaration of war for which they had been waiting.

Now that the mischief had been done the Carthaginians repented of their folly. They condemned the patriot leaders to death, and hoped that Rome would pardon. They would make any atonement she required. What was it? Let them be told. But the Senate would only say that they knew themselves already—a mysterious and disquieting reply. What did the Senate mean?

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Another embassy was sent to Rome early in 149 to treat, but they found that war had been declared, and that the double consular army had already been embarked. Humbly they repeated their offer of complete submission, but now the Senate's sole concern was to trick them into a false security. Then they would strike, and they expected that the city would fall into their hands without the trouble of a siege. Deceitfully they promised that the Carthaginians should have their freedom. Let them deliver up three hundred boys of the noblest families as hostages to the consuls at Lilybaeum: Rome's further commands would be communicated to them there. The hostages came, but the ambassadors could learn nothing more. The further commands, the consuls now said, would be announced after the army had landed in Africa. It landed unopposed. The Carthaginians came humbly to the headquarters at Utica to learn the closely guarded secret—a secret that they guessed only too well, though they dared not own even to themselves that they had guessed it. And even now it was only revealed by instalments. They were told to deliver up all the arms and armour and military engines in the city, and all the naval material and stores. They would no longer need them, they were told, for Rome would guarantee protection. The trembling Carthaginians complied. Two hundred thousand sets of arms and armour and three thousand great catapults were given up. And now that the city had been completely disarmed the consuls disclosed Rome's last demand. They had orders to destroy the city. The inhabitants, unharmed, free still—the mockery of it!—might build another inland ten miles from the sea. Then a Phoenician frenzy took possession of the people. Tricked, disarmed, powerless, they would yet resist a doom far worse than death. The magistrates who had counselled compliance with Rome's successive demands, the innocent delegates who had brought the fatal news, every Italian resident in the city, all were torn in pieces by the infuriated crowds. The gates were closed. Then

with guile to match the Roman guile they put on a mask of obsequious humility. They craved a short delay, an armistice. It was refused. But the consuls were so sure of their prey that they dallied idly at Utica. Day followed day, and the army did not move. It was a chance beyond all hope. In a fury of concentration the whole populace toiled behind their walls as armourers and smiths and engineers and helpful labourers. Houses, public buildings, temples, were ransacked for their metal and their timber. The women cut off their hair and wove it into ropes for the great catapults that were built to pound the walls. Each day turned out its toll of swords and shields, of spears and javelins and catapult bolts. When at last the consuls broke up the camp at Utica and arrived before the walls they found to their horror that they had been tricked in turn. They were faced with the long and desperately difficult siege of an almost impregnable city. They were no generals. Discipline was lax. The camp was beset with a disorderly host of non-combatants, followers who had gathered for petty trade and plunder, servants, and a crowd of women. Masinissa stood aloof. He would not help the Romans to take the prize which for years he had marked for his own. Then at the end of 149 he died.

From the first disaster and disgrace attended the operations. The consuls of 148 were even less efficient than their predecessors. Twice the army was saved from destruction only by the soldierly skill and courage of a mere military tribune,<sup>1</sup> Publius Scipio Aemilianus, the second son of Lucius Aemilius Paullus of Pydna fame, the pupil of Polybius and the adopted grandson of the great Africanus, whose wife was at once his aunt by blood and his grandmother by adoption. His reputation as a soldier and his high character—like his father he was finely scrupulous in all pecuniary dealings—turned all eyes towards him, and when he was sent to Rome in 148 by the consul with dispatches, and stood for aedile, the

<sup>1</sup> He corresponds to a colonel. Each legion had six.

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people made him consul, though he was still legal age of forty. Like the army they were only a Scipio could conquer Carthage.

On his return to Africa as consul he was about purging the army of the disorders of followers who had gathered round it

discipline. The siege began after

the walls were entered at last, and

themselves in the suburb of Mada

The retort of Hasdrubal, who

was to torture his prisoner

the eyes of the besieger

ground. Scipio now drew

the isthmus, to cut the

and then sealed up the

great mole across its

Carthaginians cut a new outlet

fleet issued suddenly,

Roman ships completely

delayed, and when it

was ruined by mischance

land and sea, and during

pestilence were left to

spring the attack was

and the remnant of the

citadel. The Romans

three narrow streets the

towering six storeys high

to be taken one by one

last, after six terrible days

itself was reached, and the

issued from the gates fifty

children, all that were left

hundred thousand. Nine

for whom there would be no

die with Hasdrubal the torture

sons. At the last moment H.

craven, and came out to throw



## THE REPUBLIC

It was granted contemptuously and he was  
his conqueror's triumph. His heroic wife  
th from which he shrank. She hurled her  
ames of the burning temple that had been  
and followed them herself.

the city to be burnt and levelled  
seventeen days the fires blazed.

across the site for a sign that  
f nature, and the soil was laid  
r. All that remained of the  
olate waste of smouldering

came a Roman province  
Utica. The Numidian  
a, no longer needed as  
treated like Eumenes  
ere clipped and their

## CHAPTER XXIII

### NUMANTIA

THE centre of interest now shifts to Spain. For ten years the country had been in rebellion. The Roman armies had suffered defeat after defeat. Generals, to escape the consequences of their incompetence, resorted to a perfidious cruelty that made the name of Rome a byword. One can only marvel that Senate and people did not now send Scipio there at once to redeem Rome's honour and make an end. But no. The political routine had to be observed. Great men must not be allowed to think themselves indispensable or they would become masters instead of servants of the Senate. So one incapable consul follows another for years. At home and abroad the senatorial government was heading for disaster—for civil strife at home, for revolt and defeat abroad. The collapse of the Republic had begun.

Spain had welcomed the Romans on their first coming as Greece had welcomed them. They were to deliver the country from the rule of Carthage. But when they stayed to rule it themselves there was passionate rebellion. It was in 197 that the provinces of Hither and Further Spain—roughly the basins of the Ebro (Iberus) and Guadalquivir (Baetis) in the north-east and south-west—were first organized, and in the same year the native tribes rose. The great Greek and Carthaginian cities of the eastern and southern seaboard, already rapidly becoming Romanized, stood by Rome as always, but elsewhere she had few friends.

In 195, Cato, the consul of the year, was sent to restore order. In Spain as everywhere he was vigorous and just. He defeated the Spaniards in a great battle, took

so he says, more cities—most of them really little more than villages—than he stayed days in the country, and compelled them all to destroy their walls. The tribute demanded of them was reasonable in amount and they collected it themselves. No Roman tax-gatherers appeared in Spain to exasperate by their oppressive methods.

But the Celtiberians and Lusitanians—the leading peoples—were still restive. Another rising was put down in 179 by Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, the husband of Scipio's daughter Cornelia and father of her two famous sons. He, too, won victories and reduced rebellious towns, and he took the trouble to understand the people and treated them fairly, making it his business to discover and remove their grievances. Thereafter, for a whole generation, the high-spirited and chivalrous Spaniards held his memory in peculiar honour, and the Celtiberians of Numantia were to repose a touching confidence in his son Tiberius for the sake of his mere name when they could trust no other.

The pity was that such men as Gracchus could not be left in their provinces to continue the work they did so well. In 192 a law had actually been passed to allow two years to Spanish praetors, but competition for office was too keen, and the Senate too jealous of its great men, to allow it to have effect.

In 155 war began again, but now with few exceptions the generals were incapable, faithless, and cruel. In 151, the consul Marcus Claudius Marcellus, a man worthy of his illustrious name, had followed the methods of Gracchus with success. He reduced the Celtiberian tribe that was in revolt, and made peace at Numantia on fair terms. But the new consul, Lucius Lucullus, like Volso in Asia Minor,<sup>1</sup> was disappointed to find the war at an end and proceeded to attack their neighbours to the west, a friendly and still independent tribe that had done Rome no harm. He marched upon them heedless of their terrified protests, and when they had submitted to him

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 175.



and made him heavy payments and supposed that they were safe at last, he let loose his troops upon their town and butchered or enslaved the entire population. In the same year the praetor, Servius Sulpicius Galba, commanding against the Lusitanians of Further Spain, where the war had already lasted for five disastrous years, was guilty of a similar atrocity. He obtained the submission of three tribes by a promise of honourable terms, and when, confiding in the word of Rome, they had laid down their arms, he had them killed in cold blood almost to a man. Infuriated by the Roman perfidy the Lusitanians gathered round one of the few survivors of the massacre, the shepherd Viriathus, a man of heroic mould, whose dauntless courage and genius for leadership raised him to their perilous throne. In a fierce war of revenge he repeatedly defeated a succession of consuls and praetors, till in 139 his murder was procured by bribery, and the people, helpless without their leader, at last submitted.

On Galba's return to Rome old Cato prosecuted him before the Assembly, but the criminal scattered gold and brought up his weeping children to excite compassion, and the prosecution failed. The word of Rome meant nothing any longer. Even the Senate itself had repudiated the settlement of Gracchus on the pretence that it was only temporary, and it was now to repeat the dishonourable trickery of the Caudine Forks.

The Celtiberians were stirred by the successes of Viriathus to rise once more in 144, but an able officer was sent against them in the following year, and was allowed to retain his command for two years. By the time he handed over the province to his successor only two cities, Termantia and Numantia, still held out. But he was succeeded by one incapable after another. The first of them, the consul Quintus Pompeius, knew nothing of war, and after several severe defeats he entered into negotiations with the cities, both of which longed for peace. What happened to Termantia is not known. It fades out of the story. The Numantines were promised

favourable treatment by Pompeius if they would surrender at discretion. They consented. His terms were reasonable and most of the conditions had already been fulfilled when his successor arrived. Only a small sum of money still remained to be paid. But now Pompeius began to ask himself what the Senate would have to say to him for concluding, without consulting them, what they would certainly regard as a disgraceful peace. So when the Numantines appeared in the camp with the money for the last payment he suddenly disowned what he had done and denied that any agreement had ever been concluded. The Numantines, of course, protested. The matter was accordingly referred to the Senate for decision, and they to their shame resolved that the war should go on. Pompeius had saved himself at the cost of Rome's dishonour. The grossly wronged Numantines resisted stubbornly, and in 137 they had the Roman army in their power. It had to choose whether it would attempt to fight its way out of a hopeless position or accept such terms as Numantia would give. The Numantines still only wanted an honourable peace. Theirs was but a little town to stand against the might of Rome. Their whole army numbered but eight thousand men. But the perfidy of Pompeius had destroyed all confidence, and they dared not take the word of the consul Caius Hostilius Mancinus, though he was reputed an honourable man. With him, however, serving as quaestor, was the young Tiberius Gracchus, and the Numantines announced that for his father's sake they would let the army go, and would accept fair terms, if he and all the staff officers would swear to observe the treaty. They did so, and the Numantines let the army go. But the Senate, lost to all sense of honour, were determined to exterminate the heroic people. They persuaded the Assembly to repudiate the treaty and played once again the solemn farce that had been played at Caudium. But Numantia was no Samnium. Rome was not in peril now. Some half-excuse could be pleaded for the repudiation of the

Samnite treaty, but none for repudiating this of Numantia. As before, the consul was to be delivered up to the enemy, but not the army. The unfortunate man was stripped to his shirt and taken to the city gates, but the Numantines, of course, would not receive him, and for a whole day he stood there between the armies with his hands bound behind his back. The ten years' siege dragged on. General after general failed. The soldiers, sunk in vice and self-indulgence, were cowardly and insubordinate. At last, in 134, the people resorted to the ablest general they had, Scipio Aemilianus. They set aside the law which now forbade a second consulship, and sent him to Spain to end the war.

Once more, as at Carthage, Scipio purged the army of the rabble of non-combatants. Cooks, butlers, actors—all the personnel and apparatus of luxurious living—were swept out of the camp. He would have none there who did not take their turn in the trenches. Officers and men alike had to content themselves with the spit and camp-kettle and drinking-cup of old. There were to be no more comfortable bedsteads: to set an example, Scipio himself slept upon a bed of straw. He could not rely upon the cowardly troops to storm their way into the town, though they outnumbered the enemy by eight to one, so a double line of walls was built about it and the army sat down to watch starvation and disease subdue the garrison whose swords they would not face. The end came in 133, fifteen months after Scipio had taken up the command. The remnant of the population were sold for slaves: the city was levelled with the ground and the site was never inhabited again.

Scipio did what he could in Spain to remove the ill effects of long years of misgovernment and cruelty and faithlessness. A new era of prosperity opened. Agriculture prospered, the towns flourished, the population grew. Much of the country, it is true, was still unsubdued: there would be other risings, other wars. But, in spite of chronic disorder on the frontiers, 'Spain was

the most flourishing and best-organized country in all the Roman dominions.' <sup>1</sup> The Latin tongue and Latin culture took firm root and spread easily and naturally over the country. So enthusiastically Roman would it become in spirit and attachment that in little more than two centuries it would have given Rome not only famous poets, orators, and statesmen, but in the persons of Trajan and Hadrian two of the best emperors she ever had.

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. III, p. 18.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE GRACCHI

FROM boyhood Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus had seemed to be marked out for an illustrious career. If he had chosen to go the way of his class, all the honours that Senate and people could confer upon their favourites would, in due course, have been his. But he chose another and a harder way: the path of service was to him the path of honour. It led to an early martyrdom but a more enduring fame.

Good looks and personal charm were his, and he had the advantage of high birth and high connections. Cornelia, daughter of the great Africanus, was his mother, and his father was that Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, senator and former consul, who was remembered so gratefully by the Spaniards for his fair and honourable treatment of the people, and who (true Roman contrast!) had sold the wild Sardinians in hordes for slaves. The father, many years older than Cornelia, had died while the children were still young, and their mother, able, distinguished, highly educated in all Greek learning and in the new Latin literature, refusing all offers of re-marriage, had devoted herself to the education of her children, and looked forward to the day when all Rome would speak of her no longer as the daughter of Africanus but as the mother of the Gracchi. By the time she had achieved her heart's desire, and the whole Roman world was ringing with the fame of her two sons, she had lost them both by murder in the streets of Rome, the elder in 133 when only thirty, the younger eleven years later, at the age of thirty-three.

There had been twelve children but only three of them

grew up—Tiberius, his even abler brother Caius, and his sister Sempronia, who married Scipio Aemilianus, now at once his cousin and his brother-in-law. Serving under Scipio before Carthage in the year 145, while still only eighteen years of age, Tiberius had proved himself a soldier worthy of his race, and had covered himself with glory by forcing his way over the walls of the city at the head of the assault. His brilliant prospects were still further enhanced by his marriage with a daughter of Appius Claudius, the liberal-minded head of the great Claudian house.

Tiberius and Caius were both well versed in the literature, history, and philosophy of Greece, and had studied rhetoric under the ablest Greek masters of the day. Their imaginations had been fired by the immortal story of Athens and the splendour of her achievement as a democracy in that glorious fifth century B.C., but they had not marked the lesson of her fall. True, Thucydides had said that what was nominally a democracy became in the hands of Pericles government by the first citizen, which is a very different thing. The constitution of Athens permitted his re-election year after year, which was not possible at this time in Rome, where, if a statesman would imitate Pericles, he must crowd his work as legislator and administrator into the narrow compass of a single year, and do it in defiance of the Senate, who were accustomed to direct the ways of all magistrates and to be obeyed by them. On that rock Tiberius was to make shipwreck. In his impatience to achieve his ends he took to the path of revolution, and let loose the passions of the city proletariat. It was he who, though himself actuated by the purest of motives—for there was no self-seeking in him—first taught political leaders to seek the favour of the noisy mob and bid for votes with the same reckless promises and wild extravagance that had ruined Athens after the death of Pericles.

Orators both, such as Roman citizens had never listened to before, Tiberius the gentle dreamer and Caius the

organizer and statesman would seek to regenerate the Roman State by infusing into it the spirit of Athenian democracy at its best. They hoped, perhaps, as all popular leaders have hoped from that day onward, that at last there should be a democracy which would escape the ills that had destroyed all its predecessors. But in truth the time had arrived, not for democracy at all, but for the great man. Kleon of Athens, demagogue though he was, had told the Athenian Assembly that a democracy could not govern an empire. And the Gracchi in all innocence were to attempt the great man's task, though they lacked the powers on which the great man founded himself, the control of executive and army.

Rome stood indeed in need of regeneration. Everybody knew that the number of men capable of bearing arms was steadily declining all over Italy, that the quality of the city population had deteriorated, and that it was discontented and in a dangerous temper. The sturdy farmers of old, who had been the very backbone of the State, had had a stake in the country, as the phrase goes. They had some property, and could furnish their own arms and armour. But the farmers had vanished over a large part of Italy, and the city rabble who eked out a precarious livelihood by the aid of the corn dole were disqualified by lack of the necessary property from serving in the legions. To furnish arms and armour was impossible: they could barely clothe themselves.

Tiberius had seen the plight of northern Italy—and that of Campania and much of the South was the same—had seen it as he passed through Etruria on his way to Spain in 137. He had 'found the country almost depopulated, there being hardly any free husbandmen or shepherds, but for the most part only barbarian imported slaves,'<sup>1</sup> and it was then that he 'first conceived the course of policy which in the sequel proved so fatal to his family.'<sup>2</sup>

There were many who were convinced like him that

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 157 and 164.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. iii, p. 132.

something must be done. There had been talk already of reviving the old Licinian laws of 367 B.C.<sup>1</sup>—of confiscating the State lands that had passed into private occupation and distributing them among the landless citizens. Caius Laelius, the friend and adviser of Scipio Aemilianus, one of the little party of progressive statesmen in the Senate, had proposed some years earlier that it should be done, but the proposal had raised such a storm of protest that he had dropped it. It was plain that it would revive in a much more acute form the constitutional struggle of the fifth and fourth centuries, and the old genius for compromise that had brought Rome through those troubled times was dead. The result now would be violent revolution, and he shrank from it. Neither he nor Scipio would willingly make a breach in the time-honoured constitution. It was unthinkable to them that they should lead the Assembly and the mob of Rome to the overthrow of senatorial predominance. They were oligarchs themselves by training and associations, and though more liberal in sympathy and clear of vision than most of their colleagues they held firmly by the old tradition that all who aspired to play that part deserved to die as Spurius Maelius and Marcus Manlius had died.<sup>2</sup>

But Tiberius was determined that the working classes should have their small-holdings and a better standard of living. No old tradition would stop him, and if the constitution proved a stumbling-block, so much the worse for it. He would accept the challenge. It was old and rusty, and needed much amending. Why, the very tribunes of the people were now young aristocrats engaged in mounting the ladder of promotion, mere agents of their caste! They were technically eligible for the office because like himself they were members of senatorial families that had originally been plebeian, but they were no champions of the working classes. As for the Senate, it was no longer the 'Assembly of Kings'<sup>3</sup> that had once gathered to itself

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 37, 38.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 59.

all the worth, ability, and experience in the State. It had become, with few exceptions, a narrow exclusive body of self-seeking nobles who had climbed into it by the profusion of the bribes that had won them election to high office. Was there any hope that those selfish, unjust, unimaginative oligarchs would deal fairly by the poor? Let the Assembly and the tribunes do their duty; then justice might be done.

Already the citizens were looking to Tiberius to right their wrongs, and get for them the public land that had been filched away. The very scribblings on the walls—the election posters of that day—called him to the task. So he stood for the tribunate, and was elected at the end of the year 134. He entered upon his office in the following spring determined to be no mere cog in the machinery of State, but a real tribune of the people, their champion and defender of their rights like Licinius and Sextius of old.<sup>1</sup> And he would act like them through the old plebeian Assembly which had the constitutional right to make laws for the whole people, and which had done so at the bidding of Caius Flaminius<sup>2</sup> in 232, though now it seemed that it existed merely to register the decrees of the Senate.

At first Tiberius hoped that he would have no difficulty in getting his measures through the Assembly, but he had not allowed for the possibility that some colleague might use that old constitutional engine of obstruction, the veto, to block his bill. His first measure was directed to the reassertion of the State ownership of all public land which had passed improperly into private hands. He would allow each present occupier to keep 500 jugera,<sup>3</sup> with another 250 jugera if he had one son, or 500 if he had two or more. More than 1,000 jugera of State land no man should hold. The rest was then to be parcelled out in lots of 30 jugera among small-holders, who would pay a nominal rent to the State for their holdings, which they would not

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> 500 jugera = 300 acres.

be allowed to sell, for if sale were permitted the nobles would soon buy them out again. The delicate and difficult business of resuming possession of the land—of ejecting the present occupiers—and redistributing it was to be entrusted to three commissioners (triumviri) who would be appointed annually by the Assembly.

Once more there was a storm of protest. Although only leased to the original occupiers, the land in many instances had been so long in their families that the present occupiers looked upon it as their own. They and their ancestors had put buildings on it and improved it at their own expense; they had even buried their dead on it, and many family tombs were there. It had been the subject of sale and purchase, and had passed from hand to hand by what the buyers and their heirs had always supposed to be a good title. All 'property' was up in arms, and the landowners looked to the Senate to defend what they held to be their rights. They were not disappointed. When Tiberius brought his bill before the Assembly, the Senate put up one of his fellow tribunes to veto it. This was Marcus Octavius, a personal friend of his, a man of honour who really believed that the proposals were unjust. Tiberius implored him not to obstruct the people's will, but in vain. Obstinacy was met by obstinacy, and Tiberius by the exercise of his veto stayed all public business and closed the treasury. So far the procedure had been constitutional, but there was no constitutional method of resolving the deadlock. The men of old had been patient: they had accepted the constitutional position, and had been content to wait years and even generations for the realization of their aims. When they were desperate and could wait no longer, the plebs seceded and the patricians bowed to necessity. But the days of secession were over, and Tiberius, a young man in a hurry, would not wait. Very much in earnest he could not believe that his opponents might be honest, too: and he was one of those dangerous people who convince themselves that as the end they have in view is a righteous one

they are justified in adopting any means of achieving it, however violent or revolutionary. To his way of thinking a tribune who thwarted the popular will was no true tribune of the people, and he proposed a bill deposing Octavius from office. The Assembly passed it, and Octavius, after a violent scene, was forcibly turned out. It was an unconstitutional act that invited retaliation, for if the person of Octavius was not sacred what protection was there for his own? A threefold wrong had been done. No officer of State could lawfully be ejected from office—he could only be tried for his misdemeanours when he had quitted it; the veto, that fundamental prop of the whole constitution, and of the tribune's power, had been disregarded for the first time in Roman history; and the sacred person of a tribune, also for the first time, had been violated by the use of force. Tiberius had delivered himself into the hands of his enemies. He had set an example that they would certainly follow.

Meanwhile Tiberius himself, his young brother Caius, and his father-in-law, Appius Claudius, had been appointed Triumvirs, and the work began. To enable the new small-holders to equip and stock their holdings Tiberius now proposed to deal out among them the treasure of the last Attalus of Pergamus, who had just died, leaving his kingdom and his wealth by will to the Roman people. It was another bid for popular favour, which he hoped would secure him re-election as tribune—in defiance of the law that forbade a second term of office—and so avert the otherwise inevitable prosecution for his illegal actions. But the majority in the Senate had already planned his death. On the election day they raised against him the old cry that he would make himself a king, and led by a Scipio, who with a gesture of religion gathered his toga round his head as though about to sacrifice, they tore in pieces the benches that had been set for the Assembly and battered him to death. With him by a like death fell on the same day three hundred of his followers. Hatred pursued him even after death. His

brother Caius was not allowed to take away the poor battered body and give it burial. It was dragged in dishonour through the streets and thrown into the Tiber with the rest.

So die all traitors who dare deeds like his,

said Aemilianus, quoting a line from the *Odyssey*, when the news of his kinsman's death reached him at Numantia. He had loved the man: it was the revolutionary, not the reformer, that he abhorred.

This was the first Roman blood to flow in civil strife. Rivers of it would flow in the years to come.

Though Tiberius was dead, his work survived him. There had always been a minority of liberal-minded senators who sympathized with his aims, though not with his methods, and the majority, when they had satisfied their savage zeal by the trial and execution of a large number of his adherents, found it wiser not to interfere with the work of the Triumvirs. Tiberius's vacant place was filled, and during the next three years many new settlers were placed on the land. Then there came a halt at the instance of Scipio Aemilianus, for the Latins had been annoyed by the threatened resumption of State land in which they were interested, and Scipio convinced the people that it would be unwise to offend them. But his action cost him his life. He was found dead in his bed one morning in 129, the undoubted victim of a political murder at the hands of an unknown adherent of the Gracchan party. But the affair was hushed up: there was no inquiry.

The land-hunger had by now been largely satisfied, and the party of Reform were busy with schemes for extending the franchise and amending the constitution. The Italian allies were to be pacified by admitting them to the citizenship, and the tribunes were to be declared eligible for re-election to successive years of office. The first measure however was highly unpopular, and was not carried. Then suddenly in 125 Rome was shocked by the revolt of



Fregellae, wealthy, powerful, chief of the 'Latin' colonies, so steadfast in its support in the days of Hannibal, when the twelve colonies refused their aid. Fortunately for Rome the revolt did not spread. There was no time. Treachery within the walls admitted the Roman troops, and a terrible vengeance was taken. Its walls were pulled down: its civic rights were forfeited: what was left of it was degraded like Capua to the status of a mere village.

It was at this time that Caius Gracchus first came forward to take up his brother's work where death had interrupted it. He had been kept by the Senate for three years as quaestor in Sardinia, where he could do no mischief, but at the end of 124 he suddenly returned to Rome and stood for tribune. He was elected and looked forward confidently to years of beneficent rule as the people's champion. He had long been preparing himself for the task by thought and study. He was not a dreamer like Tiberius, but a man of great practical ability. He had all his brother's personal charm—for his nature was lovable, and his friends were many and devoted—and he was an even finer orator. Using the power his office gave him he now set himself to create a party pledged to political reform that would, he hoped, destroy the Senate's power in the State. He would act through the popular Assembly where the tribunes, and only the tribunes, could initiate legislation, and he hoped that as permanent tribune he would be able to play the part that Pericles had played in Athens, governing in the interests of the whole people, and not like the Senate in the interests of a tiny section of it.

He bound the needy citizens to his cause by the extension of the corn dole. Each month they could have enough for their subsistence out of the State granaries at less than half of the cost price. The taxes of the new province of 'Asia' would pay for the dangerous and demoralizing bribe. For even the humane Gracchus saw no injustice in imposing heavy taxes on provincials for the benefit of Roman citizens. Indeed he was the first to

teach the doctrine 'that all the land of the subject communities was to be regarded as the private property of the State.'<sup>1</sup> As the dole could only be drawn at Rome a crowd of country claimants was attracted to the city, and kept there with nothing to do but talk politics and shout for Gracchus—and on occasion vote—at the meetings of the Assembly. Henceforward until the establishment of the Empire destroyed the political importance of demagogue, voter, and Assembly alike, 'the corn-supply was mixed up with politics, and handled by reckless politicians in a way that was as ruinous to the treasury as it was to the moral welfare of the city.'<sup>2</sup>

Next, Caius won to his side the men of money, and divided them from the men of birth. The senators were not allowed to engage in trade or commerce, and there had always been jealousy between them and the capitalists—bankers, contractors, merchants, money-lenders—who were known as the Equites—horsemen, knights. Originally it was the style of those who under the old property qualification were serving in the army as cavalry:<sup>3</sup> now the name was applied to all who owned property to the required amount,<sup>4</sup> though they might never have sat upon a horse. Caius bought their support by two measures. The first gave them the opportunity of making enormous wealth: the second put judicial power in their hands and enabled them to defend it. They were allowed to farm the taxes of 'Asia,' that new province which the last Attalus had bequeathed to Rome, and they were substituted for the senators as jurors in the Roman Court of Justice. As jurors they would have the trying of governors and high officers of State—senators all—who had used their power to oppress and plunder provinces and allies. The senatorial jurors had rarely attempted to do justice. Too many of them had themselves been guilty of like offences. The proconsulship or propraetorship furnished an oppor-

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. iii, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Warde Fowler, *Social Life at Rome*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> At this time about £4,000.

tunity to amass great fortunes and rid themselves of the load of debt incurred by their vast expenditure on bribes and public entertainments in the effort to secure election to high office. But the knights were no more anxious to do justice than the senators. The only difference was that the guilty senator—and on occasion even an innocent one—would now be condemned, while extortionate knights who were ruining Asia would be acquitted. For the protection of tribunes who like his brother and himself might offend the senatorial faction, he secured the passing of a law reaffirming that earliest principle of the constitution that no citizen might be put to death without a trial.

Supported by both the business men and the working classes Caius seemed to have made his position secure, and he now set about the introduction of measures designed to put agriculture on its feet again, and to find work for the unemployed of Rome. He created more small-holdings at the expense of the great landowners; put into operation a vast scheme of road-making that not only provided employment on a great scale, but at the same time made it easier for the farmers to market their produce; and revived the once popular but now long-neglected remedy for over-population, the foundation of colonies. His untiring industry and his great executive ability delighted his supporters.

So far all was well, but now Gracchus imperilled his position by a statesmanlike effort to remove the long-standing grievances of the Italian allies. They might well be discontented. They could not trade with each other; they could not intermarry; they had never shared in the foundation of colonies; they might not even live at Rome. Only two or three years before there had been once more a general ejection of those who had illegally established themselves in the city. Though at this time they furnished the best troops in the army, Italian officers could not rise above the command of their own contingents, and they had to see mount above them Roman officers who secured promotion by virtue of their political

positions, and whose inefficiency led to defeat after defeat. And of course they were denied the Roman citizenship; they had no vote. Still more galling was their personal treatment by the Roman nobility. In Roman eyes they were inferiors, and they were subjected not seldom to a haughty insolence that was unendurable. Gracchus told the Assembly on one occasion how the chief magistrate of a provincial town had actually been stripped and scourged because a consul's wife complained that the public baths had not been properly cleaned and set in order for her use.

Gracchus now proposed that Italians should be admitted, equally with Romans to the new colonies of full citizens which were to repeople Capua and Tarentum and, notwithstanding all previous resolutions, Carthage itself, which was to be called Junonia—the first community of Roman citizens to be established outside Italy. That privilege the Roman populace might be willing to concede, but when he went further and proposed that the full citizenship should be given to all communities that had 'Latin' rights, while Latin rights should be conferred upon all the rest of Italy, he lost touch with a large section of his supporters. The measure was thoroughly unpopular. The people wanted no more citizens coming up to overcrowded Rome to share the corn dole, to compete for places in the baths and theatres and at the gladiatorial shows, and to outvote them in the Assembly; and the Senate liked the proposal no better, for they saw in the Italians only vigorous opponents of privilege who would attach themselves to Gracchus, though in truth they should have realized that the concession of the franchise would make of them a really stable element in the constitution—citizens far more responsible and reliable than the rag-tag of Rome.

Just at this critical time Gracchus was away in Africa for ten weeks, busy with the foundation of his new colony, where from the start everything went wrong. The omens were dreadful, and the old curse of Scipio—and of the gods—upon the site scared the people. His

absence gave the Senate an excellent opportunity of further undermining his influence. Once again a tribune was put up against the reformer, one Marcus Livius Drusus, a man of ability and position who, perhaps like Octavius before him, really believed that by defeating Gracchus he would avert civil war and save the State. The tactics employed were ingenious. Drusus set up as rival demagogue—with his tongue in his cheek. Gracchus had proposed to establish two colonies in Italy: Drusus offered an impossible twelve. Gracchus had charged a small rent for the allotments of public land, which the small-holders were not allowed to sell: Drusus abolished the rent and permitted the sale. In short, whatever Gracchus had proposed Drusus outbid him, telling the people that what he did was done with the approval of the Senate who really had their interests at heart. It was easy to deceive them. They told themselves that the leaders of both parties were bidding for their support, and that if they could get more from Drusus than from Gracchus they would do well to take it. It might be shortsighted, but it was natural. So when Gracchus came back from Africa and Drusus vetoed his franchise bill the people approved his action. Concerned to see his influence crumbling Gracchus now left his mansion on the Palatine Hill and went to live in the slums among the workers in an attempt to win back his popularity, but though he still had a large following he was defeated when he offered himself for a second re-election to the tribunate. He had learnt, like many a popular leader before and since, how fickle the electorate can be. 'The multitude, in fact, never voted for Gracchus, but always simply for itself.'<sup>1</sup>

The Senate now set itself to undo his work. He had not been out of office a month when early in January 121 they attacked his measures for the colonization of Junonia. No more colonists were to be sent out. Gracchus, now that he no longer had the protection of his office, wanted

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. iii, p. 117.

above everything to avoid any violence that would give his enemies a handle against him, but he could not restrain his followers. Party temper had been excited by the proposal of the Senate, and when the day came for the meeting of the Assembly a large number of his hot-headed supporters appeared upon the scene with arms by their sides determined to protect their leader. The good old custom that had kept politics free from physical violence could not survive in times like these. What was intended to protect Gracchus proved his undoing. One of the other side made an insolent remark: daggers flashed out and he was stabbed to death. A scene of wild excitement followed. Gracchus, who had done all that he could to preserve order, was held responsible for the murder. The Senate declared him a public enemy, and the ensuing night was spent by both sides in preparation for a fight in the streets. Caius himself took no part in the preparations, and when morning showed that his adherents were heavily outnumbered, and negotiations with the other side produced no result, he tried to escape across the river. But the Senate had set a price upon his life, and he was closely pursued. Two devoted friends gave their lives in an attempt to gain time for him while he hurried on accompanied only by a faithful slave: but escape was impossible, and at the last moment the slave at his master's order killed him and then stabbed himself upon the body. Some thousands of the supporters of Gracchus fell in the massacre that followed or were strangled in the prisons afterwards. The victorious party founded a temple of Concord at the cost of their confiscated property. But it was an ill-omened peace that could not possibly endure. The vanquished democracy would return to the attack as soon as they could find new leaders. The Gracchi had fallen because the mob could not protect them. The party leaders of the future would come to their task with armies at their backs.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE EMERGENCE OF THE GREAT MAN

#### CAIUS MARIUS

IN the Rome of the third century B.C., while life was still simple and office was regarded as a high responsibility—a call to service—the great man played no predominant part in her history. Each year two honest competent men were found to take charge under the Senate of the administration, and to lead the militia out to war. The Senate was continually recruited by new men of plebeian origin who had risen to office by merit, and it was therefore always in touch with the people. But office ennobled, and the circle of Senatorial families—the new nobility—which for generations had readily admitted new-comers to its ranks, became self-conscious and exclusive. The sweets of office were for them alone. It may seem strange that the electors, with whom rested the choice of the great officers of State, should have ceased to look beyond this narrow circle. The reasons, however, are not difficult to find. There was no longer the old wide range of choice. The solid independent farmers had largely disappeared, and there was no real city middle class, for in a slave state it is squeezed out. Even the free tradesmen and artisans were disappearing. Between the very poor—the unskilled labourers—and the very rich there was therefore a broad unoccupied gulf. And the number of wealthy families was small. In 104 B.C. it was stated that there were hardly two thousand in the whole of Rome; and of those only a minority could furnish candidates for office, for the law excluded the business men—the knights.

But the citizens had another and very potent reason for not looking beyond the circle of the noble families. Their public amusements, which they would not forgo, were provided for them at enormous cost by the rich men who canvassed for their votes. They would not look any longer at a poor man, and a 'new man,' even if he were not poor, had great difficulty in breaking down the barrier which custom had set up against him. Only twice in three generations did the electors go outside the circle of the noble houses for a consul. Caius Marius won their votes because Rome needed a great soldier, and Cicero by his golden speech.

It was not until the long war with Hannibal that the old system began to break down. Then at last popular feeling compelled the Senate, much against their will, to give a wide authority for several years in succession to the illustrious Scipio, and to see him mount in prestige and influence above his fellows. But Scipio was a man of noble character, a great gentleman, and he did not abuse his position. In the next generation, however, there was a great change. The war had interrupted the old-fashioned education of the youth, and when they grew to manhood they had not the wisdom or the integrity of their fathers. When as soldiers or administrators they were exposed to the temptations of the wealthy and luxurious East they made no effort to resist them, and their descendants fell still further away from grace.<sup>1</sup>

And all this time the empire was expanding; and the administrative and military duties thrown upon the Senate continually increased. If they were to be performed adequately there was need of ever more public men distinguished for their capacity, devotion, and integrity. But notoriously it became more and more difficult to find them. The young nobles no longer gave themselves from boyhood to military duties and hard physical training. They avoided both. The ambition of the great majority was, not to serve Rome or to win fame

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 23.



as soldiers, but to gain riches, no matter how, and to lead lives of ease and luxury.

The Senate as a body had learned nothing from their experiences during the Gracchan revolution. They had regained control. They would not if they could help it excite the temper of the people against them, but they were no wiser and no better. Indeed, they were soon to exhibit more plainly than ever their complete unfitness for their imperial duties. The scandal of the Numantian war had been great, but it paled before the stupendous corruption<sup>16</sup> and incompetence displayed during the troubles with Numidia.

At the moment, however, there was no alternative government to be found. The Assembly could do nothing. It had shown itself unfit for any duties even when it had a great leader to give expression and effect to its desires. It had failed two of the most unselfish and devoted that a democracy has ever had. Now leaderless it was dumb and paralysed, and for some years the authority of the Senate was not disputed. So far as they dared they undid the work of Caius Gracchus. It was not safe to touch the corn dole or to eject the small-holders who had been settled on the land. Nor did they venture to offend the capitalists by altering the constitution of the juries. It was safer to form an unholy alliance with them for the time under which each party connived at the irregularities of the other, and the provincials were robbed by senatorial governors and farmers of the taxes alike. Colonization ceased, however, at home and abroad, and all occupiers of State land were converted into absolute owners. They could sell or otherwise dispose of it at pleasure, and of course many who had little love of country life and small skill in the management of land soon sold their holdings and drifted back into the city. The times were troubled. Slave risings were frequent. The slaves even formed armies that prowled plundering and murdering about the country, especially in Sicily, where a Roman army was defeated and cities were brought to the verge

of famine. Pirates roamed the seas in organized bodies, issuing from fortified strongholds in Cilicia. But the Senate would never grapple seriously with the problem of their suppression. They were one of the main sources of the supply of slaves, and it was said that there were senators who actually did business with them or took their money. More than forty years later Cicero was still protesting against the scandal. Famous cities in Asia Minor were captured: Roman officers were held to ransom: Roman armies for the East were careful to cross the Adriatic from Brundisium in winter when the pirate fleets were laid up: even the Appian Way itself was not safe from their inroads.

But it was in Numidia that the Senate sounded the depths of humiliation and infamy. When Masinissa died in 149 his three sons divided the duties of sovereignty between them, and reigned together in content and harmony. Micipsa, the eldest, outlived his brothers and died sole sovereign in 118. By his will he left the kingdom to be governed, as he and his two brothers had governed it, by his sons, Adherbal and Hiempsal, with whom he associated Jugurtha, the illegitimate son of his youngest brother, whom he himself had adopted as a son two years before. The Senate guaranteed the arrangement. But Jugurtha would be no compliant partner. Fair dealing was not in him. A man of great ability and daring, he was also at once exceedingly ambitious and utterly unprincipled. His character was well known at Rome, and in turn he knew the character of the Roman nobility through and through, for as a young man he had served with them under Scipio before Numantia in command of a Numidian contingent. For Roman soldiers and statesmen he had a measureless contempt, which he was now to exhibit for the space of fourteen years to the world at large. His cousin-brother Hiempsal, the abler of his two partners, was soon put out of the way by assassination, and Adherbal, whom he first goaded into war and then chased out of Numidia, went to Rome to lay his case

before the Senate. He was followed by the envoys of Jugurtha, well furnished with gold, now in Rome the most potent of all arguments—so potent that to the scandal of all right-minded men, of whom there were still some in the Senate, that body ignored Adherbal's petition, passed over Jugurtha's crimes in silence, and directed that the kingdom should be divided between the two. Commissioners were dispatched to Numidia to effect the division, but they too were bribed and they gave Jugurtha the populous and fertile western half, leaving Adherbal with the capital, Cirta,<sup>1</sup> and the sandy deserts of the eastern half. But that did not satisfy Jugurtha. He meant to have the whole kingdom. He attacked Adherbal and besieged him in Cirta, a busy town in which many Italian business men had settled with their families. Adherbal and the Italians appealed to Rome for protection. Embassies were sent to communicate the Senate's orders to the king, but he knew how to deal with them. The orders were ignored; the siege went on, and still there was no declaration of war. At last the town was in extremities, and the Italians advised surrender, confident that they and their property would be protected by Rome's name. But they were mistaken. Rome's name had no terrors for Jugurtha. As soon as the town surrendered he butchered every grown man within the walls, the unfortunate Adherbal among them. There was a cry of horror and indignation throughout Italy. The corrupt majority of the Senate quailed before the storm. For a time the little company of honest patriots had their way. War was declared and an army was sent to Africa. Jugurtha had not counted on this. For once his bribes had failed him. He knew that he could not stand against a Rome in earnest. Numidia was no Carthage. He craved an armistice, and bribed so successfully that the Senate admitted him to peace beyond his hope or prayer. They gave him back his kingdom on the easiest terms. He had to pay a fine—not heavy; to surrender the Roman

<sup>1</sup> The modern Constantine.

deserters in his army—that was easy; and to give up his war elephants—which were promptly sold back to him again by the army chiefs. Could corruption be more brazenly audacious?

A renewed storm of protest forced the Senate to summon the king to Rome. He came under a safe-conduct with his money-bags, and when a patriotic tribune began to cross-examine him before the Senate a venal colleague interposed his purchased veto.

And now while in Rome under a safe-conduct in the midst of his enemies he committed the most daringly impudent crime of his career. There was living in the city at the time the Numidian prince Massiva, a grandson of Masinissa of legitimate descent. He saw his chance and appeared before the Senate to claim the kingdom. Could there be any risk in that? In Numidia, of course, it would have been madness: but in Rome—Jugurtha's hired daggers surely could not reach him there. But they did; and when his minister who hired the assassins was arrested and put on trial, Jugurtha's money opened the prison gates and got him safely out of Italy. This was too much even for the Senate. They dismissed the king: the treaty was denounced, and the war began again early in 110. Jugurtha left with a biting jest on his lips. If he had only gold enough, he said, he would undertake to buy the city itself.

Of course the war was mismanaged. The consul was incompetent: the soldiers were undisciplined. There was a disgraceful defeat; the army surrendered and was sent under the yoke, and Jugurtha compelled the officers to renew the cancelled treaty. Once more a flame of indignation swept through Rome. Prosecutions were instituted and a number of the offending nobles were driven into exile. But still there was no revolution, for there was no man of mark to head it. The Senate, however, now looked round for a consul to take command in Africa who would be at once competent and incorruptible, and the choice fell upon Quintus Caecilius Metellus,

a stern and even savage disciplinarian. With him to Africa he took upon his staff one Caius Marius, the son of a poor Volscian farmer, who had risen from the ranks, a man with two names only instead of the aristocratic three.

Marius was born in 155 B.C. in a village belonging to the Volscian town Arpinum, whose citizens had received the full Roman franchise in 188, the last Italian town to receive it before the Social War. It was Rome's good fortune that he was born a citizen. After a boyhood at the plough he was encouraged to enter the army by Metellus, the patron of his family, and served—with Jugurtha—in 133 before Numantia, whither he had gone with a kindly recommendation from Metellus to Scipio himself. By his courage and soldierly bearing he earned the general's favour and was rapidly promoted.

But the supreme command could only be attained by those who had achieved political distinction, so perforce Marius, an ambitious soldier, embarked on a political career for which he had no gifts.

Scipio was murdered in 129, but Metellus still befriended the young soldier and he became a tribune of the people, in which office he showed a sturdy independence of character alike towards his patron and towards the masses. Later, in 115, he was praetor and commanded in Spain. He was by this time a man of mark. He was known to be upright: none could bribe him. As an officer he was scrupulously just, showing neither fear nor favour. He understood the soldiers' point of view, and on campaign moved easily among them, lived simply—till in middle age he took to drink—kept himself in training, and shared the hardships of the life. Always he had their good word, which ensured his popularity among the citizens. Though he had little education and no Greek, and his manners were rough, he had achieved social advancement: office had given him a seat in the Senate and he had gained a fortune—by honest means. What is perhaps more surprising, he made at some later date a distinguished marriage with Julia, the aunt of the great

Caesar, and so became allied to one of the most ancient patrician families of Rome.

But aristocratic connections did not make an aristocrat of him. To his disgust Metellus and the great senatorial houses disdained to accept him as an equal. If they had but taken him heartily to themselves as the patricians had taken the great plebeians of the past he would probably never have become a revolutionary. Instead there would have been one more new senatorial family, and his descendants would have been as haughty and as exclusive as the rest.

When Metellus took command in Africa, Jugurtha knew that ultimate defeat was certain. He asked for terms, but Metellus was resolved to seize and execute him, and he could but resist to the end. He suffered a defeat in a severe battle in which Marius greatly distinguished himself, and then took refuge in the desert where the conditions suited his wild horsemen and the Romans were at a disadvantage. Still pressed hard he fled to his father-in-law Bocchus, the king of Mauretania, and for a time it was uncertain whether Bocchus would join forces with him in a national uprising against Rome, or whether he could be induced to give him up—at a price.

By this time the date of the consular elections was approaching. Marius wished to stand, for he aspired to succeed Metellus and have the glory of finishing the war. Metellus, on the other hand, felt, not unnaturally, that as he had done the hard work he should be allowed to retain his proconsular command till he had made an end, and had ridden in triumph through the crowds to the Capitol. So when Marius asked for leave Metellus refused it, and sneeringly suggested that he should wait for the consulship till his boy could be his colleague—wait till he was past soldiering. At the last moment, however, he gave a grudging permission, and Marius raced against time for Rome. There in the short time available for the prosecution of his candidature he descended to play the demagogue and whip up the

passions of the mob to win votes. He spread all sorts of stories against Metellus, whom he now hated violently, and when the nobles derided him he retorted that their great ancestors had won their way to office and fame not by their birth but by their deeds.

Here in Marius the masses thought they had at last the leader for whom they had been waiting, the man who would put the nobles in their place. The merchants and bankers—the knights—furious at the incompetence that had led to the massacre at Cirta and ruined business in Africa, also supported him enthusiastically, and he was elected by a huge majority. The people in the Assembly, usurping the function of the Senate, at once appointed him to the command in Africa, and he left for the seat of war early in 106. Arrived there he found it less easy to catch Jugurtha than he had expected. In the end the capture was effected by inducing Bocchus to give him up, and the man who ventured his life in the Mauretanian camp to do it was Lucius Cornelius Sulla, a young dandified noble, brilliantly clever, but self-indulgent and at present untried, who had been sent out as quaestor and lieutenant to Marius, and who now discovering his talent for the art of war set himself with diligence to master it. He was to prove himself as the years passed the superior of Marius as a general and incomparably his superior as a statesman, and his challenging opposition from this time forward lay athwart the current of the life of the older man.

Jugurtha was captured, and the war ended in 105. On 1st January 104 Marius entered the city in triumph, Jugurtha on foot dragging his chains before the victor's chariot. A few days later the king met his end in the prison below the Capitol, where so many of Rome's great enemies had perished.

Already in his absence—a course without precedent—Marius had been chosen consul again for the year 104. Of the law which forbade a re-election within ten years the people made short work, for over Rome hung the shadow of a deadly peril which none but he could dispel.

In the previous October two Roman armies had been cut to pieces at Arausio<sup>1</sup> in the lower valley of the Rhône by the Cimbri, apparently a German people with a considerable admixture of the Celt, a whole people on the move with their wives and children and possessions in their train of wagons. The slaughter had exceeded that at Cannae, and Italy was left defenceless. There was neither army nor general to keep the barbarians back. Marius was still in Africa, and had the victorious enemy chosen to make at once for the Alps and Italy, Rome's story might have ended there, and the work of civilizing the western world would have had to start afresh from the beginning. Fortunately the barbarians went westward for the Pyrenees and Spain, and gave Rome a respite of three priceless years for the reorganization of her military system and the training of the new professional army that took the place of the old militia.

Furiously the citizens turned on the men who had been responsible for the disasters and disgrace of recent years, and who had now put the very existence of the State in peril. Defying the constitution they stripped a proconsul of his office. Tribunes who sought to interpose their veto were thrown out of the Assembly. Volleys of stones were hurled at the leading senators. Revolution was again afoot. There would be no more amateur generals. Marius was elected to the consulship for four years in succession.

Already on his appointment to the command in Numidia he had taken a first step towards the reorganization of the army. Even then it had been impossible to obtain from among the citizens recruits in sufficient numbers who possessed the property qualification required of the legionary,<sup>2</sup> and he had taken men where he could find them. There was no reason why the workless city rabble, the 'mongrel, idle, and hungry population, who claimed to be the Roman people,' should not make good soldiers, if they could not be—as after the end of the third century

<sup>1</sup> Orange.

<sup>2</sup> The minimum amount is said to have been the equivalent of £115.



they never were—good citizens. Trained in the use of their weapons in the new fashion of the schools of gladiators, and taught discipline by the centurions, they did. And the net was thrown more widely still. Auxiliaries, and even legionaries, were recruited in the provinces. Spaniards, Africans, Thracians, even Bithynians from Asia and Cretan archers pressed into the service.

Marius now proceeded to organize the legion on an entirely new model. The distinctions of property and length of service, which had determined a man's weapons and armour and his position in the line, were swept away. Henceforth the legion is the familiar legion of the Empire. Its ten cohorts, each normally of six hundred men, are divided into six sections of one hundred led by centurions: the equipment is uniform: the spear at last is laid aside altogether: the only distinction between man and man is military: and for the first time there appears the new standard, the world-famous silver eagle, a sacred emblem that in camp had its special shrine and ritual. Under the Empire the legion became a permanent body of long-service men, with its own number, name, and tradition, and regular provision was made for its veterans on retiring. For the next hundred years, however, it was not permanent, but was discharged at the end of each war, and as the Senate accepted no responsibility for the discharged soldier it was left for the general to do so. Under the circumstances, it was natural that the soldier should look to his general and not to the Senate. In a crisis he would follow the man who could secure his future. The State meant nothing to him.

In the summer of 102 the barbarians were back again. Another horde headed by the Teutones (Germans) had now arrived, and the two armies made for Italy by different routes. The Cimbri crossed the Rhine and marched for the low eastern passes of the Alps; the Teutones made their way down the east bank of the Rhône, intending to enter Italy by the coast road. Marius with a large army now thoroughly trained and disciplined

awaited the latter in a camp where the river Isère joins the Rhône. For three days in succession the Teutones assailed it, and then finding that they could make no impression, and that Marius would not come into the open, they broke up their laager and continued their march down the Rhône.

As soon as the enemy had passed him Marius followed them cautiously as far as the hot springs of Aquae Sextiae, the modern Aix, and there in a great battle he utterly annihilated them, the fight ending among the wagons, where the women resisted to the death.

Meanwhile the Cimbri had descended unopposed into the valley of the Po. The other consul, Quintus Lutatius Catulus, failed to check them, and it was with difficulty that he withdrew his unsteady army behind the river. The Cimbri, however, did not press their advantage. They were in comfortable quarters and there they stayed till the winter was over. In the interval Marius had brought back his victorious army, and on 30th July 101 he and his colleague gave battle to them on the Raudine plain near Vercellae. Once more the Roman victory was complete. Italy had been saved. Not for five hundred years would the barbarians set foot again within the Alps.

Marius was now master of Rome, and must play the politician as titular chief of the popular party. He entered into close association with their leaders, Lucius Appuleius Saturninus and Caius Servilius Glaucia, two self-seeking demagogues who had already headed the mob in violent scenes with the aristocratic party. Now that the war was over these men were resolved to take up once more the programme of reform that had been interrupted in 121 by the murder of Caius Gracchus. Marius, who had scattered enormous bribes among the people, became consul for the sixth time in the year 100. Glaucia was city praetor and Saturninus one of the tribunes. They would tolerate no opposition. When one of their opponents seemed likely to get a place among the ten tribunes he was set upon and killed by a band of the

consul's ex-soldiers. It was the simplest way of getting rid of the veto. To gain the support of the people the price of corn was to be lowered to a merely nominal figure, which it was known must mean public bankruptcy; and the veterans were won by the promise of extensive allotments of land in Transalpine Gaul, which would involve a war of conquest. Constitutional procedure was defied. Opponents were prevented by the soldiers from recording their votes and the necessary laws were pushed through the Assembly. The senators were told that they might choose between swearing to observe the new laws and forfeiting their seats. All took the oath except Metellus, who went with honour into exile.

But Marius had been hurried by his associates further and faster than he wanted to go. Public opinion had been alienated by their violence and extravagance; the men of business, who always sided with the party that kept order and maintained credit, had withdrawn their support; and he now separated himself from Saturninus and Glaucia. Retreat was impossible for them, and when they brought their armed bands into the streets the Senate and their supporters appeared in arms with Marius at their head and routed them in a pitched battle in the Forum. The leaders were captured and shut up in the Senate-house, but the young nobles, urged on it is said by Sulla, stripped the tiles off the roof and pelted them to death. Once more the Senate had triumphed. Marius had discredited himself with both parties and for the time his influence was destroyed. Still he did not despair. He was a man of crude superstitions, and long ago an augur who had been consulted had told him that he would be consul seven times, so he knew the luck would turn again. And turn it did, unfortunately for Rome. But by that time Sulla was the great man. The return of Marius and his seventh consulship were but a bloody interlude. The Roman revolution had passed, as the French revolution was to pass, into the hands of the butchers. Each party in turn proscribed and massacred its opponents.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SULLA

AND now Rome was to meet the judgment of heaven and pay in fullest measure the dreadful penalty due for the sins and follies of a hundred years. A heavy toll would be taken of all Italy in slaughter and devastation: innocent and guilty alike would be called upon to pay: but the heaviest toll of all was exacted—as was but just—of the nobles and the knights. Politics became a great gamble. Whether the senatorial or the popular party would be uppermost depended, not on the votes of the citizens, but on the swords of the soldiers, and men played the game in the spirit of the gambler and paid forfeit with their lives.

The story of the years that follow is tangled and confused. Measures were passed and repealed and passed again. The constitution was in the melting-pot. Nothing was stable.

Two questions now demanded attention beyond all others—the terrible maladministration of the eastern provinces with the consequent unrest, and the dangerous discontent of the Italians, who were clamouring for admission to the citizenship. So long as the juries were composed of knights it was impossible to bring the tax-farmers to justice, though their offences cried to heaven for correction. Yet when Marcus Livius Drusus, the son of Caius Gracchus's rival, a wealthy noble but a patriot, tried as tribune to restore the control of the juries to the Senate, enlarged by the addition to it of three hundred knights, he found that the senators gave but a half-hearted support to the measure, while the Assembly thoroughly disliked it. He succeeded, however, in getting it through the Assembly by tacking it to two

other bills in which they were interested, so that the Assembly must take all or none—an unconstitutional and dangerous procedure which has been attempted in modern times. He offered them the usual bait, an increase of the corn dole and a new distribution of land, both on such an extravagant scale that, as he said, future demagogues would find nothing left to distribute but the dirt and the daylight. But the Senate would have no tacking. They stood by the constitution and refused their assent to the combined measures, and Drusus, who had earned the ill-will of both Senate and Assembly by associating himself closely with the demands of the Italians, was murdered shortly afterwards.

The last hope of the Italians had vanished with his death. It was now plain that if they would have the citizenship they must fight for it. There was no other way. Secret preparations for revolt had been proceeding for some time. The advantage of numbers was with the Italians, who of late had furnished two men to the army for each single Roman; and they had arms in plenty, for each town equipped its own contingent. Rome was unprepared and undefended; her walls were in decay.

Late in 91 an affair at Asculum in Picenum, east of the Apennines, was the signal for the outbreak of the revolt. A Roman praetor had come to the town with a small escort to investigate a report of treasonable correspondence, and he seized the occasion of a great gathering for the public games to harangue the people in a haughty and threatening manner. It was putting spark to powder. The infuriated people rushed upon him and tore him to pieces and then searched out and slew every Roman in the town. At once all central and southern Italy flew to arms. Yet never did insurgents, with the sole exception of the Samnites, wish less for insurrection. Even now they sent their envoys once again to Rome and offered to lay down their arms if she would but make them Roman citizens. But no; Rome was obdurate. By way of fortifying her resolution she even tried and sent into

exile those senators—they were her best and wisest—who had shown their sympathy with the Italians.

As some set-off against the superior numbers and preparedness of the allies Rome had the incomparable advantage of her central position; she had, too, her fortress-colonies that had stood the strain of Hannibal's invasion, and her administrative system. Moreover, at the outset both Etruria and Umbria in the north stood by her, and she could draw on the Gauls and Numidians for men and on the Greek cities for ships.

The Italians established their capital at the Paelignian town Corfinium, which they renamed Italica, and they set up there the machinery of government, creating an artificial city state in slavish imitation of the great original with consuls and praetors, senate and assembly. But the component elements of the new state were physically isolated. At least one grave disaster was caused by the difficulty the allied peoples had in obtaining information of each other's positions and movements.

Late in 91 the war began and for the first year it went ill for Rome. The strain on her resources was immense. Business was paralysed: revenue was failing: Asia was on the verge of revolt and at any moment its all-important contributions to the treasury might cease. Fortunately the gravity of the peril silenced for the moment party feuds. All soldiers of note came forward with the offer of their services. At the head of the popular party was Marius, still dreaming of great achievements and that seventh consulship, and among the leading members of the senatorial party to receive high command was Sulla. The two rivals, the older and the younger, were once more in competition, and it was the younger who came out of the war with all the honours. Marius in a subordinate command had his successes, but in general he had disappointed expectations and was considered to have failed. The end of the war found him unemployed, while Sulla's great victories kept him in the public eye, and he had the glory of bringing it to a successful end.

The disasters of the first year and the alarm caused by them forced Rome to abandon her old obstinate exclusiveness and agree to a compromise. All Italian states that had not yet declared war against her were admitted to the citizenship. True, they were still treated as inferiors, for like the freedmen they might only enrol in a few of the tribes where their political influence and voting power would be small. But the insurrection spread no further, and when in the following year (89) a second law was passed offering the citizenship to all who submitted within sixty days the confederacy began to fall to pieces. At the same time the Gauls beyond the Po were rewarded for their loyalty by the grant of Latin rights.

The losses on both sides had been immense. There were 300,000 dead, all, on whichever side they had fallen, lost to the Roman armies of the future. Far and wide the land had been devastated and property destroyed. Hannibal himself had not worked such destruction.

The story of the recapture of Asculum may serve for an example of the terrible ferocity with which the struggle was fought out. The town had long been besieged when Caius Judacilius, one of the Italian generals, himself an Asculan, appeared with an army for its relief. The consul Cnaeus Pompeius Strabo, father of the great Pompey, commanded for the Romans. Judacilius was defeated, but he succeeded in throwing himself into the town, which was naturally strong and was defended desperately by people who knew that surrender would be followed by a punishment as savage as the massacre which had given the signal for the outbreak of the war. Curses were cut upon the leaden bullets of the slings to give them force and truer aim, 'Hit the Picentes' on the Roman bullets, 'Hit Pompeius' on the Italian.<sup>1</sup> At length Rome prevailed. No terms were sought or offered. Before Judacilius gave the word for surrender he had the principal citizens of the pro-Roman faction

<sup>1</sup> Such bullets are picked up still.

tortured and put to death, and then he killed himself. The Romans entered and took their bloody vengeance. The fortunate few whose lives were spared lost all they had and were driven forth to beggary.

In the south Sulla, the other consul, earned the grass wreath from his army by his victories over the Samnites. He, too, took a bloody vengeance, and terror marched before him. By the end of 89 Rome was everywhere victorious. Only among the mountains of Samnium did the insurgents remain in arms. There they maintained a precarious independence till in 83 Sulla returned conquering from the East, whither he was shortly to carry his victorious legions. For he had emerged from the war with a reputation that marked him out as the man to meet Mithradates, who in the early spring of 88 had set the East afire.

Sulla, 'one of the most marvellous characters—we may even say a unique phenomenon—in history,'<sup>1</sup> was born in 138 of a noble family which extravagance had reduced to poverty. He soon emerged from his early obscurity, for he was always fortunate, and speedily carved out a way to wealth and fame. He was at once scholar, wit, boon-companion, and man of action. He could be genial and generous and yet under other circumstances pitiless and savage. He delighted equally in the pleasures of the table and in the society of the wise and learned. His will was iron. When he was sober he was never idle, and neither mind nor body was impaired by his excesses. In action he was apt to rely upon the inspiration of the moment, and therefore at a crisis no man could tell what he would do. But his inspiration seldom failed him. As a young man he had been very good-looking, but in later life his appearance was extraordinary and forbidding, for his blue eyes were keen and glaring and his otherwise colourless face was disfigured by rough blotches of a fiery red.

Before he could leave for the East he had to measure

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. iii, p. 358.



his strength with Marius in civil war and lead his soldiers against Rome itself. The end of the Social War had found Marius an embittered man. Then in the spring of 88 Mithradates, the king of Pontus, who had refused his help to the Italians when they begged it—another piece of extraordinary good fortune for Rome—assumed the offensive in Asia Minor, and in the outbreak of war Marius saw a new opportunity, and though he was now sixty-seven years of age he set himself stiffly to military exercises before the eyes of Rome among the youth upon the Campus Martius.

The city was full of revolutionary ferment and Italy was only half appeased by the grudging and ungenerous nature of the settlement. The public finances were in complete disorder; the treasury was empty; credit was exhausted; the many debtors could not pay the interest upon their loans. The old hostility between the Senate and the knights flared up again, for there were many senators among the indebted, while the knights, many of whom were bankers and money-lenders by profession, were mostly creditors. Both sides resorted to the law-courts, the creditors to claim their due, the debtors to plead the old obsolete anti-usury laws that forbade the payment of interest. The city praetor gave his decision in favour of the debtors, and was beset and murdered in his own court. The city was once more torn by faction; it was the opportunity for a demagogue, and the demagogue appeared.

Publius Sulpicius Rufus, one of the tribunes of 88, was a patrician who had renounced his order and taken plebeian rank to qualify for office. He had been a friend of Drusus and inherited his anti-senatorial policy. The disgraceful corruption of the senators had been largely due to the fact that so many of them were in debt and would always sell their votes for money. Sulpicius therefore proposed to purge the Senate by excluding from it all who were in debt to the extent of £80. As a bid for popular support he made known his intention of admitting the

new Italian citizens and the freedmen to complete equality with the old by throwing open all the tribes to them. The Senate, of course, resisted both proposals and Sulla, now consul, supported them. Sulpicius raised a riot in the streets. Sulla's life was in peril: the Senate had to yield and the measures were allowed to pass. But Sulla was not the man to accept defeat, and he left Rome for his army in Campania. Sulpicius seeing his danger turned to Marius and secured his support by persuading the people to transfer to him the command of the army in Campania and the conduct of the war against Mithradates. Obediently the new citizens passed the necessary law (for they were no friends of Sulla), though it was an unheard-of thing that a private person (for Marius held no office) should be appointed to the command. As soon as the measure was passed the Assembly unwisely sent two tribunes down to Campania to take over the army from Sulla. But the legions were devoted to their general and cared nothing for tribunes or Assembly. The unfortunate tribunes were torn to pieces and Sulla marched on Rome. In earlier days it would have been held sheer sacrilege for an army to cross the sacred boundary of the city, but the curses that forbade it had no terrors for the new legionaries and in a few hours Sulla was master of Rome. Sulpicius and Marius and their chief adherents fled. Twelve of them were proscribed—their names were publicly posted—by the Senate as public enemies and a price was put upon their lives. This first modest list would be succeeded in the years to come by dreadful lists that swelled to thousands. Sulpicius was caught and put to death, and his head was nailed up on the rostra in the Forum. Marius escaped a close pursuit after many remarkable adventures, to the story of which the citizens listened with bated breath as it filtered through. On one occasion he was captured while hiding naked deep in the mud of a salt-marsh, and was hurried off to the neighbouring town, the Roman colony of Minturnae at the crossing of the Liris near the coast. There the local

magistrates ordered their executioner, a Cimbrian slave, to put him to death, but when the Cimbrian entered the dark room where Marius lay, the old man's eyes 'seemed to the fellow to dart out flames at him, and a loud voice to say, out of the dark, "Fellow, darest thou kill Caius Marius?" The barbarian hereupon immediately fled, and leaving his sword in the place, rushed out of doors, crying only this, "I cannot kill Caius Marius."'<sup>1</sup> The people of Minturnae let him go and finally he reached Numidia, where he waited till the departure of Sulla for the East allowed him to return to take a terrible revenge upon his enemies and to receive his seventh consulship.

Meanwhile Sulla had reversed the legislation of Sulpicus and committed the government once more to the Senate. The voting power in the Assembly was put into the hands of the wealthy citizens, and the tribunes might no longer initiate legislation unless the Senate had given them permission. But the elections for the year 87 had put in office as consul Lucius Cornelius Cinna, the leader of the popular party, with Cnaeus Octavius of the senatorial faction for colleague, and Sulla left for Greece as proconsul in that year well knowing that a renewal of civil war was certain. At first Octavius had the upper hand and Cinna fled, but he was soon back again in overwhelming force. Marius joined him from Africa and the city fell; but the old man, whose hair and beard had not been trimmed since he was outlawed, grimly refused to enter until his sentence had been reversed, and then he passed the gates, urged on by a mad blood-lust, to set up a reign of terror. 'He came into the city with a select guard of the slaves who had joined him, whom he called Bardyaei. These proceeded to murder a number of citizens, as he gave command, partly by word of mouth, partly by the signal of his nod. At length Ancharius, a senator, and one who had been praetor, coming to Marius, and not being re-saluted by him, they with their drawn swords slew him before Marius's face; and henceforth

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. ii, p. 107.

this was their token, immediately to kill all those who met Marius and saluting him were taken no notice of, nor answered with the like courtesy; so that his very friends were not without dreadful apprehensions and horror, whensoever they came to speak with him.

' . . . Now was every road and every town filled with those that pursued and hunted them that fled and hid themselves; and it was remarkable that there was no more confidence to be placed, as things stood, either in hospitality or friendship; for there were found but a very few that did not betray those that fled to them for shelter.

‘Catulus Lutatius, who was colleague with Marius, and his partner in the triumph over the Cimbri, when Marius replied to those that interceded for him and begged his life, merely with the words, “He must die,” shut himself up in a room, and making a great fire, smothered himself. When maimed and headless carcasses were now frequently thrown about and trampled upon in the streets, people were not so much moved with compassion at the sight, as struck into a kind of horror and consternation.’<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Marius had been elected consul for the seventh time as the oracle had promised. He entered on his office in January 86, but by that time his excesses had brought upon him the execration of the whole people: even his colleagues had been horrified. Sleep now left him. To drown thought he soaked himself in drink. A fever seized him and in a fortnight he was dead. A sigh of relief went up. It was the end of the reign of terror. Sertorius, one of his colleagues, a gallant and noble-hearted man of whom we shall hear again, rounded up his gang of desperadoes to the number of four thousand and had them killed to a man. For the three years 86-84 Cinna ruled Rome as self-elected consul. He had his army behind him and he had the new Italian citizens— and the freedmen, whose equality at all points with the—

<sup>1</sup>Ib., vol. ii, pp. 111, 112.

old citizens had been confirmed. Debtors he conciliated by the remission of three-quarters of all private debts. Most of the provinces recognized his authority. Sulla had the East and no more. What decrees could do against him had been done. He had been stripped of his command, but the decrees of Cinna did not run in Macedonia and his position was not affected by them. His house in Rome had been razed to the ground: his estates had been wasted. But by 84 he had beaten Mithradates and he could tell the Senate that he was on his way to Rome. To prepare his path he let it be known that the new citizens had nothing to fear from him. Punishment there must be for the murders and excesses of the Terror, but it would fall on the guilty alone. At last Cinna bestirred himself. He resolved to cross to Greece and fight, but his troops mutinied and killed him, and in the spring of 83 Sulla landed at Brundisium with his five legions and auxiliaries, some 40,000 men in all, to face 100,000. But his men were veterans and devoted to him. To provide him with money the legionaries brought him the whole of the savings they had amassed in four years of war and licensed plunder. The government had been surprised and the landing was unopposed. At first Sulla was conciliatory. People began to join him; even members of the other party came in and found a welcome and a pardon. In Picenum an amazing young man not yet twenty-three gathered, armed, and organized three legions, evaded or beat the armies sent against him, and joined Sulla in the south to be hailed as *imperator*.<sup>1</sup> This was Cnaeus Pompeius, whom we know as Pompey, the son of that Pompeius Strabo who had been Sulla's fellow consul in 89. The father had been distrusted and hated, and when he was killed by lightning in his tent in 87 it was said that heaven's vengeance had fallen on him, and the mob dragged his dead body in contumely through the streets. Utterly unlike him his son was a universal favourite.

<sup>1</sup> The title given to a victorious commander-in-chief.

There also joined Sulla from Africa Marcus Licinius Crassus, the future colleague of Caesar and Pompey as triumvir, who was about a year older than Pompey. His father, a former consul, had lost his life in the Marian proscription, and he himself had fled for safety to Spain, and for eight months he and a few companions lived concealed in a cave by the sea where they were provided secretly with food. He too was a general of some ability, and he gave Sulla good service, but it was to his pre-eminence as a financier and his vast wealth that he owed the power of his later days.

Two consular armies came down from the north against Sulla, but after the first had been defeated the soldiers of both came over to him. Rome, however, was still in the hands of his enemies, and between him and the city lay Marius the Younger, the twenty-year-old son of old Caius, now consul in spite of his youth, at the head of his father's veterans. Marius suffered a crushing defeat in Latium and threw himself into Praeneste,<sup>1</sup> first giving orders that before Rome was evacuated all the leading members of the senatorial party whose lives had been spared hitherto should be put to death. The orgy of murder that followed shocked all Rome. Shortly afterwards Sulla occupied the city and then passed on northward to meet an army that had gathered in Etruria, where there was hard and doubtful fighting. Meanwhile the Samnites, still in arms, made a last despairing effort. They marched swiftly on Rome under another Pontius, who bade them 'rid themselves once for all of the wolves that had robbed Italy of freedom, and destroy the forest where they harboured.' As soon as Sulla received the news he came south again with all speed, but the Samnites arrived before him and encamped a bare mile from the Colline Gate near the north-eastern angle of the city walls. On that November morning of 82 the peril of Rome for some hours was extreme, but fortunately, before the assault could be delivered Sulla's vanguard came in sight and by

<sup>1</sup> The modern Palestrina.

midday his main body had arrived. Without delay he flung his tired troops upon the Samnites. All that afternoon the battle raged, and through the night that followed. Not till next morning did the struggle end. Then a division of the enemy came over to Sulla and turned their arms against the Samnites, and their action decided the issue. There was no escape for the enemy and the destruction of their army was complete. Only some 3,000 or 4,000 prisoners were taken, and they were put to the sword three days later in the Campus Martius within the hearing of the Senate, that at the moment 'was in session listening to a speech from Sulla. 'The cry of so vast a multitude put to the sword, in so narrow a space, was naturally heard some distance, and startled the senators. He, however, continuing his speech with a calm and unconcerned countenance, bade them listen to what he had to say, and not busy themselves with what was doing out of doors; he had given directions for the chastisement of some offenders. This gave the most stupid of the Romans to understand that they had merely exchanged, not escaped, tyranny.' <sup>1</sup>

Marius still held out in Praeneste, but when news came of the result of the great battle in the shape of heads of well-known officers that were thrown over the walls, the garrison surrendered and Marius and his colleagues killed themselves.

While the issue of the long struggle was still in doubt Sulla had been ready to pardon, but now that it was decided he was merciless. Praeneste, a rich city, was given up to pillage. As for the prisoners, he 'at first proceeded judiciously against each particular person, till at last, finding it a work of too much time, he cooped them up together in one place, to the number of 12,000 men, and gave order for the execution of them all, his own host alone excepted. But he, brave man, telling him he could not accept the obligation of life from the hands of one who had been the ruin of his country, went

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. ii, p. 170.

in among the rest, and submitted willingly to the stroke.' <sup>1</sup> Wherever resistance lingered it was the same story. Much of Samnium became a desert. In Rome the proscriptions were renewed and the bloody deeds of Marius and his son were repaid in kind. Many innocent persons were hurried to death merely because their personal enemies had Sulla's ear and contrived to get their names inserted in the lists. None could feel safe. 'Those who perished through public animosity or private enmity were nothing in comparison of the numbers of those who suffered for their riches. Even the murderers began to say that "his fine house killed this man, a garden that, a third, his hot baths." Quintus Aurelius, a quiet, peaceable man, and one who thought all his part in the common calamity consisted in condoling with the misfortunes of others, coming into the Forum to read the list, and finding himself proscribed, cried out: "Woe is me, my Alban farm has informed against me." He had not gone far before he was dispatched by a ruffian, sent on that errand.' <sup>2</sup>

The provinces still had to be recovered. Pompey quickly recovered Sicily and Africa, and for his victories claimed a triumph. It was an unexampled privilege that he asked, for he had held no civil office and was not a senator, and none but senators had ever been allowed to triumph. But the times were unexampled. Victorious generals and their armies could not be slighted, and when the young man's soldiers showed that they intended him to have his triumph, Sulla, who had hesitated, gave way and hailed him when he appeared as 'Magnus'—the Great—which from that day was to be his name.

Only in Spain did the popular party continue to make head. There Sertorius defied all generals sent against him, even Pompey himself, till the year 72, when an envious and ambitious subordinate murdered him, and Pompey was able to recover the country. The Spaniards had worshipped Sertorius. Though he governed them

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, vol. ii, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*



for Rome he was like no governor they had ever seen. The best of his predecessors had been birds of passage, but he for eight years had set himself to the task of educating and Romanizing the people. They were no longer inferiors to be exploited for the benefit of the conquering power and its proconsuls, but equal members of the Empire whose well-being it was the first duty of their governor to promote. He set a great example, which seems to have taught Caesar, who revered his memory, not only how to govern Gaul when he had conquered it, but how to make it the foundation of the personal power which was to raise him to the mastery of Rome and all her provinces—a power which he sought that he might restore order throughout the whole Roman world and bring about well-being everywhere.

At Rome for two years Sulla was supreme as dictator, an office last held in the days of Hannibal. All opposition had been crushed by the reign of terror. The dreadful lists of the proscribed had included nearly five thousand names. Sulla's vengeance had fallen most heavily on those ancient enemies of the senatorial order the knights, of whom no fewer than sixteen hundred had died. Between them Marius and Sulla had blotted out many of the most illustrious families and sent to death many of the best and ablest men in Italy.

Sulla now set himself to the task of reorganizing the government. Though the Senate had failed so completely in the past it was to a restored and strengthened Senate that he looked. He had no personal ambition. He did not wish to rule. An oligarch by temperament and conviction he loathed democracy, and he proceeded so to amend the constitution as to establish the form of government in which he believed. He reduced the historic office of the tribunes of the people to insignificance. They might no longer aspire to any other office, and therefore no man of mark would accept the tribunate in future. That mighty constitutional engine the veto he destroyed by limiting its use to the protection of

individual citizens—in which it had originated. He even abolished the office of censor because it carried the power and duty—too seldom exercised—of degrading senators who had shown themselves unworthy of their position. Once more an interval of ten years was required to elapse before a man could be elected to a second consulship, and none could be appointed to that office who had not passed through the lower offices step by step. As for the Assembly, no proposals for legislation could be submitted to it that the Senate had not first approved. The corn dole with its dangers, political and financial, was swept away, and in order that he might have no discharged soldiers loafing discontented about Rome, Sulla settled the men of no fewer than twenty-three legions on the immense areas of confiscated land up and down Italy, there to be his stout supporters and in effect so many garrisons. But many a lawful owner had been ejected to make room for them, and the families of the proscribed had lost their all. These were embittered folk who only waited for the day when once more the scale would turn in their favour. On the other hand ten thousand slaves were emancipated. In accordance with custom they bore thenceforward the name of their liberator and were Cornelii, a body of supporters to vote for him at elections and in the Assembly, and to battle for him in the streets. But the settlement of Sulpicius in 88, which had given the full franchise to the Italians, was prudently left undisturbed. To wage war without the Senate's order was made an act of high treason. In future, if he could help it, no man should arrive at the mastery of Rome as he had arrived at it.

But it was all in vain. Within ten years Sulla's work had been undone again, and the Senate had lost control, never to recover it. His example had a more enduring influence than his precept. The proconsul with his army in a frontier province was not to be restrained by flimsy legal barriers of recent date.

But while Sulla retained his power few ventured to

oppose him. The risk was too great. Two men, however, dared his wrath. One was the young Caius Julius Caesar, the other Marcus Tullius Cicero. Caesar, still a young man of fashion and not more than twenty-two years of age, had married Cinna's daughter Cornelia. His marriage and his connection with Marius made him suspect. Sulla bade him divorce his wife, but he refused. The order was repeated with a threat behind it, and Caesar, still defiant, fled for his life to the mountains of Samnium. And it was Sulla who gave way. Powerful friends obtained Caesar's pardon, but the dictator had seen the real character that underlay the mask of foppery. 'In that effeminate boy,' he warned them, 'lie hidden many Mariuses.' Soon afterwards Caesar left Italy for the East, and remained there till Sulla died in 78.

That Cicero should have dared Sulla's wrath may seem more surprising. Born in 106 at Arpinum, the birthplace of Marius, of a knightly family, he had already at the age of twenty-six made some name for himself as an advocate in the law-courts. It happened that a certain Sextus Roscius, a wealthy man, had been murdered during the disorders of Sulla's reign of terror, and the murderers, who were akin to him and wanted to get possession of his property, sought and obtained the interest and protection of Chrysogonus, the dictator's favourite freedman, a man of great wealth and power. The dead man's name was accordingly inserted in the list of the proscribed. That automatically made his property, which was worth some £60,000, forfeit to the State. It was put up for sale, and knocked down to Chrysogonus for a beggarly £20, and he then divided it with the assassins. Not content with this, the conspirators next tried to get the dead man's son, Sextus, out of the way by charging him with his father's murder, and Cicero undertook his defence when the leading advocates for fear of Sulla declined to do so. He exposed all the details of the crime and of the iniquitous conspiracy to which Chrysogonus had been a party, and lashed the favourite with all the force of his young

eloquence. Sulla was notoriously indifferent to the excesses of his creatures, and he may have known nothing of what had happened. It was well to assume that he did not, and Cicero adroitly suggested by a flattering parallel that it could not be expected that he would. His position, he said, was really that of Jupiter himself. Men suffered all manner of disasters by nature's violence, yet none ever thought to blame the god. The care of Rome was like the care of the universe. Neither god nor Sulla could possibly know all that went on in the world beneath them. Cicero won his case. The court acquitted the young Sextus. But Cicero, like Caesar, thought it well to get out of harm's way, and went first to Athens and then to Rhodes to study rhetoric under the best masters of the day.

Having done his work and put the Senate in control, Sulla abdicated the dictatorship in 79 and retired to his villa on the Bay of Naples, there to write his memoirs and occupy his leisure according to his curiously contradictory tastes. In the following year he died. Already party struggles had begun again. To the multitude Sulla's name was odious, and his death a matter for thanksgiving. In the confusion of the moment there was even an attempt to deprive his body of the honour of a public funeral, but Pompey, though he alone of Sulla's friends was not mentioned in his will, chivalrously escorted it to Rome. The veterans acclaimed their dead general, and the funeral was celebrated with a splendour without parallel.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### POMPEY

SULLA, the great man, was dead, and he had left no successor. He had not wished for one. The restored and strengthened Senate was to rule. But the men who composed it were no wiser and no better than those who for two generations had dragged Rome's name through the dirt, and they were no more successful. The ten years that followed Sulla's death were years of unparalleled disorder at home and abroad.

While Sulla lived democracy had not dared to show its head: but the city was seething with discontent, and after his death men felt that they could say what they felt without undue risk. Political institutions that had been the pride of Rome for centuries had been destroyed. The tribunate, that ancient pillar of the constitution, had been stripped of its power and prestige; the Assembly had lost its initiative; the honoured office of the censor had disappeared. If one would realize what Roman citizens were saying one need only ask what British citizens would say if some dictator had taken away its time-honoured freedom from the Press, prohibited all public meetings, silenced the pulpits, and suppressed the House of Commons. To the natural discontent of political enthusiasts in a city of politicians was added the passionate resentment of the sons of Sulla's many victims, who had been robbed of their ancestral property and excluded for ever from office. An armed rising was attempted in 78, but it was easily defeated. Nothing, however, could any longer check political agitation or stay the flood of oratory, to which Caesar was already contributing. The knights were as dissatisfied with the government as any. Not

only had they lost their position in the jury-courts, but they had been deprived of the coveted privilege of farming the taxes of Asia, and—what touched their pride—of their seats of honour in the theatre. None but the senators had gained by Sulla's constitutional changes. For the time they had all the power and to them fell all the spoils of office. Unprincipled and shameless though most of them were, they might perhaps have continued to enjoy them if they could have maintained order. People will endure much from any government that resolutely protects life and property; but never in Rome's history had life and property been so insecure from Italy outward through all the wide range of her dominions. Spain was still in revolt: Mithradates had renewed his activity in Asia Minor: by sea the pirates were more daring and dangerous than ever. Many of the corn ships that fed Rome were being captured; wheat was becoming scarce and dear, and the populace, not without reason, feared that soon there would not be food enough for the city's needs. Gangs of armed slaves roamed the countryside: kidnapping and murder were common events: large estates were seized and occupied. For two years (73-71) all the open country in the south and south-west of Italy was in the hands of an army of them. The rising had begun in the escape from their barrack-prison of a few score of gladiators who had been infuriated by brutal ill-treatment in one of the training schools of Capua. Led by an heroic Thracian slave, a man of noble birth named Spartacus, they had sought refuge on the slopes of Vesuvius, and there they were joined by slaves from all the country round in numbers that swelled rapidly, till they became a formidable army of 40,000 men. They defeated army after army sent against them, and even stormed and occupied considerable towns. In grim retaliation the gladiators sent their prisoners to make sport for them in the arena. At last, after the consuls of 72 B.C. had been badly defeated, the Senate removed them from the command, and appointed in their room Crassus,

the only available general in Italy. For the task they gave him eight indifferent legions which he could not trust. They were but raw militiamen, for the trained soldiers were all abroad, either in Spain fighting Sertorius under Pompey, or in Asia Minor where Lucullus, one of Sulla's ablest generals, was conducting the long and difficult war against Mithradates. Crassus therefore had his difficulties. A division that threw away its arms and fled he sternly decimated: one man in every ten had to die. When at last he succeeded in driving Spartacus into the hills of Bruttium—Hannibal's last stronghold—like Scipio at Numantia, and for the same reason,<sup>1</sup> he built an entrenched wall thirty-two miles in length across the neck of the peninsula. But the barrier did not hold, for one dark night Spartacus and his army broke through the lines, and in the spring of 71 the task of rounding them up had to be begun over again. Fortunately the slaves had no clear plan, and there were quarrels. Spartacus, knowing that ultimate defeat was certain if he stayed in Italy, wanted to cut his way out of the country, but his men were less clear-sighted. They had no wish to go out into the wilds of the Balkans: they preferred to take their chance in Italy, where there were rich estates to plunder and life had its comforts. At length Crassus won a decisive victory in Apulia, and Spartacus was killed. A remnant escaped northward, only to meet Pompey and his veteran troops on their way back from Spain. They were overwhelmed and for an example to all slaves 6,000 prisoners were nailed to crosses set up at intervals along the road from Capua to Rome, there to die the lingering tortured death of the crucified.

As a reward for their services Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls for the year 70. Though both had been strong supporters of Sulla and his reforms, the incompetence of the Senate had altered their views, and they proceeded to restore the old constitution. Tribunes and Assembly regained their former powers: the censorship

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 196.

was revived, and the new censors, the two consuls of 72 whom the Senate had removed from their commands, took a sweet revenge by degrading no fewer than sixty of its members whose lives had been disorderly or who had been among the most obnoxious of Sulla's creatures: the knights regained the control of the jury-courts, for though the senators were not entirely excluded there were two knights for each single senator: the farming of the taxes of Asia was committed to them once more, and their seats of honour were restored. The Senate had already reinstated the corn dole eight years earlier.

In the same year (70) Caius Cornelius Verres, one of Sulla's trusted officers, who for three years had been governor of Sicily, was brought to justice for his outrageous treatment of the Sicilians. In these days an upright governor was hardly to be found in the Roman dominions. But there were degrees in their iniquity, and Verres had far outdone them all. He would carry off the gold and silver plate of the rich men in whose houses he had dined as a guest, or he would make some ancient family part with its priceless heirlooms for a trumpery sum: he stripped temple walls of their historic pictures, and temple gates of the gold and ivory that adorned them: he had pillaged the farmers and vine-growers till they were on the verge of beggary: and he had even carried off the ancient and sacred image of the goddess Ceres from its shrine. There was no limit to his extortions or his cruelty: neither property nor person was safe from him. When he laid down his office the indignant Sicilians persuaded Cicero to undertake his prosecution. All Rome watched the progress of the trial with intense interest, for it was a test case. The people were determined that Verres should suffer: the nobles spared no effort to secure his acquittal. But the evidence was damning, and Cicero made the most of it. After fourteen days Verres saw that his conviction was inevitable, though the jury was still composed entirely of senators and his bribes had been colossal. He accepted defeat and fled from Rome.



Two years later the citizens once more made plain the intensity of their democratic feeling. In 68 Julia, the widow of Marius, died. At the funeral of his aunt Caesar displayed the statues of her husband, which had not been brought out since Sulla made himself master of Rome, and the crowds cheered them. The mad crimes of the seven-times consul had been forgotten: it was only remembered that he was a man of the people, and that he had saved Rome by his victories. In the same year Caesar began his political career as quaestor, and went to Further Spain.

The name of Marius was a trump card in politics. In 65 Caesar played it again. The public memorial of his great victories which Sulla had thrown down was restored secretly one night in all its old splendour, and such was the enthusiasm of veterans and populace that the Senate dared not intervene. Caesar was gaining ground. In that year as aedile he had the care of the city administration and with it the costly duty of providing the public games, which he discharged with a lavishness that loaded him with debt. No predecessor had ever given such a show. There were 320 pairs of gladiators in silver armour, and the wild beasts for the arena were housed in silver cages. He achieved his purpose. All men were talking of him. Before long he would have a province, and that would clear him of his debts. Meanwhile Crassus the millionaire financed him.

These were the days in which Pompey rose to the height of his power and prestige—in spite of the Senate who, from a totally mistaken fear of him, did their best to debar him from all military employment. But he was the ablest general Rome had—for Caesar as yet had had no opportunity of discovering his genius for war—and in 67 the people voted him the command against the pirates. For the scandal had become unendurable. The half-hearted efforts of the Senate had failed again and again, and the people were determined to end it. They proposed to give Pompey authority for three years over all the coasts of the Mediterranean, with ships and men and money at his

demand, and he was to have twenty-five lieutenants, all senators, men of his own choice, to serve under him. The Senate vehemently opposed the proposal. Such a thing had never been done before. They said that it was unconstitutional; that it would make Pompey master of Rome. But the food supply had been imperilled and the people were in earnest. Caesar lent his support, and the proposal was carried. Public confidence was restored, and the price of corn, which had been soaring, fell at once.

Pompey had indeed the powers of a monarch for the period of his command. All that Caesar became he could have been, all that Caesar did he could have done, if he had had the vision of a great statesman and the will to undertake the task of welding the empire together and organizing its administration for the benefit instead of for the plunder of its many peoples—a task that cried for a great man to put his hand to it. But Pompey was not the man: he was a soldier and no more.

On receiving his appointment he set to work at once to sweep the seas from end to end. A single summer sufficed. In three months the pirate fleets had been destroyed; all their strongholds had surrendered; their multitude of captives had been set free; 20,000 prisoners had been taken. The victory was the more swift and thorough because Pompey had shown himself merciful as well as just. Many a man had been driven to piracy for a living by the misgovernment and oppression of generals and governors, and they only wanted the opportunity to become decent citizens again. If he had crucified all his prisoners, according to the practice of the age, the pirates must have resisted in desperation to the death. When he showed mercy and gave them land and settled them in colonies, those who were still in arms flocked to the conqueror in an eager competition to surrender.

In the following spring the Assembly proposed to add the province of Bithynia to Pompey's wide command and to give him charge of the war against the irrepressible Mithradates. Once more the Senate, horrified at the idea

of putting such unheard-of powers in the hands of any man, did their best to defeat the proposal. But Cicero, still a good democrat as became his origin, could show that Pompey had not abused his former powers or harmed the State: on the contrary he had restored peace and order to the seas where peace and order had been unknown for years, and he would do the same in Asia. The knights as a body supported him, for the business world had suffered heavy losses in Asia Minor during recent years, and the reappearance of Mithradates in the field threatened sheer disaster. Caesar took the same side. The proposal was carried, and for the next three years Pompey's victories and the splendour of his conquests were the wonder of the world. No general had ever done the like before. The name of Rome had regained its old prestige.

Meanwhile in the city the politicians of both parties were asking themselves in concern what he would do with his power when he came home at the head of his devoted legions.

There had been a time when the Greeks both in Europe and in Asia had hoped great things of Mithradates. They counted on him to free them from the oppression of Roman governors and tax-gatherers, and in due course he did it, but it was only to substitute a still worse oppression of his own. Born in 132 B.C., Mithradates came to the throne of Pontus as a boy of twelve, and ruled from his capital of Sinope on the Black Sea. Rome had been his enemy from childhood. She had taken Phrygia from him and taught him early to fear and hate her. The Greeks had always been his friends. He was a remarkable man, picturesque in person, of great stature and powerful frame. His endurance was amazing; his ability great and his ambition spacious. Lord of twenty-two peoples of different speech he could address each in their own tongue. As Rome blocked the way south he went conquering northward along the Black Sea coasts and delivered the Greek cities of the Crimea from their

Scythian oppressors. Then as he gained strength he began to encroach upon the territories of his neighbours in Asia Minor, and Pontus grew at the expense of the kingdoms of Cappadocia and Galatia and Paphlagonia. The balance of power which Rome tried to maintain was disturbed. She would have the states weak and divided, and here was one growing to a dangerous strength. For a time his gold kept the Senate quiet, but at last his usurpations became too flagrant. He had tumbled the King of Cappadocia from his throne, and Sulla was sent in 92 on a diplomatic mission to bid him give up his conquests and restore the king. It was enough. He still had the fear of Rome upon him and he obeyed. Then came the revolt of the Italians and the Social War. Word went out through the East that the day of the oppressor was over, and he took up arms again in the spring of 88. The forces at the disposal of Manius Aquillius, the haughty and overbearing Roman legate, were negligible, and as the king drove on through Asia Minor the Greek cities hailed him as 'the delivering god,' and gave up their Roman commandants as prisoners. When Mytilene gave up Aquillius, Mithradates dragged him about with him in chains, an object of derision to Greek and Asiatic: and then with fiendish malice, in mockery of his insatiable thirst for gold, did him barbarously to death by giving him the molten stuff to drink. But his vengeance was still unslaked. Every Italian whom he could reach must suffer, and the dreadful order went out to all the cities that on one day every man, woman, and child of the hated race within their boundaries should die. On that day 80,000 victims perished. Few states or cities dared to disobey.

Master of most of Asia Minor, and with the pirate fleets under his flag to hold the seas for him, Mithradates hastened, like Antiochus before him, to set Greece free. The Greeks gave an enthusiastic welcome to his general, Archelaus, himself a Greek, and the whole country with a considerable part of Macedonia and most of the islands

of the Aegean were in his hands when Sulla landed in Epirus in the spring of 87. Sulla had no fleet, no base in Italy, which was in the hands of his enemies, no treasury to draw upon—no support but his own genius and the valour of his legions. But that sufficed. Archelaus was driven out of Greece, and Athens was recovered after a long siege. A second and a third invasion were repelled, and then, with ships that had been built or scraped together, in the spring of 84 Sulla advanced to the Hellespont and crossed to Asia. The Greek cities had long wearied of the rule of Mithradates, for in cruelty and extortion he had far outdone the worst of Roman governors, and the king had to surrender all his conquests and make peace. He got off lightly. His atrocities went unpunished and he retained his kingdom of Pontus unimpaired, for Sulla was needed urgently in Italy.

But if the king escaped punishment the Asiatic Greeks did not. All who had been concerned in the massacre of the Italians were put to death, and the province had to pay in full five years' arrears of taxes owed to Rome—though Mithradates had taken them and more—and an enormous war indemnity was levied. For two generations the people were impoverished by the burden of the enormous debt incurred to meet their obligations. They had indeed been between the hammer and the anvil.

After some years of inaction Mithradates took up arms again in 74. The king of Bithynia, west of him, had died in the previous year leaving his kingdom to Rome, and Mithradates invaded the country. Again the pirates helped him, and he was even in communication with Sertorius in Spain. At first he was successful, but then a general of genius, Lucius Licinius Lucullus, a man humane and just, though afterwards more widely known for his great wealth and the luxury in which he lived, was sent against him and chased him out of Pontus. But his son-in-law, Tigranes, the powerful king of Armenia, now took up his cause. He had conquered Cappadocia westward and Syria and Antioch far south, and lorded it now

to the frontiers of Egypt, a king of kings like the great monarchs of Nineveh and Babylon of old. But he could not stand against the Roman. Lucullus beat him in 69 and took his capital, Tigranocerta, but dreams of conquest drew him on eastward till the legions wearied of the endless marching and mutinied at Nisibis in Mesopotamia early in 67. Lucullus, never popular with his men, great general though he was, was compelled to retreat. Meanwhile, one of his lieutenants had lost all his conquests in Pontus, and the work of seven years of war had gone to waste.

This was the position when the war with the pirates ended in 67. Lucullus could be employed no longer. Army and citizens alike were against him: the soldiers because he was too strict, the knights because he was just and checked their exactions, the Senate and the people because he had failed. Only the provincials of Asia had a good word for him. He had been merciful himself and he had protected them from their oppressors.

In the spring of 66 Pompey left Cilicia and turned to his new task. He proceeded through Galatia to Pontus, and Mithradates sued for peace; but only unconditional surrender would satisfy Pompey and the king could not submit to humble himself so far. Not daring to face the legions he retreated towards Armenia, followed cautiously by Pompey, who after many marches surprised his camp in a night attack and utterly destroyed his army. Mithradates escaped with three attendants and fled along the upper course of the Euphrates for Armenia. But Armenia was to be no refuge. The Parthians had recently dealt a heavy blow at Tigranes, and he no longer dared to anger Rome by sheltering his father-in-law. So he set a great price upon his head and the old man fled north along the Black Sea, while Pompey, none the less, turned east for the Araxes and Armenia to match himself against the king of kings. But Tigranes had lost heart. His son had already gone over to the Romans hoping to steal his father's throne, and Tigranes to preserve it hastened

to throw himself at Pompey's feet. His submission was accepted, but his conquests were stripped away, and he had to pay a huge war indemnity and make a donation to each Roman soldier. Then he received back his Armenian kingdom at the hands of Pompey, no more a king of kings but himself Rome's vassal. All Asia Minor west of the Euphrates was now Roman. Such a year's work no Roman general had ever done before.

The next year, 65, Pompey spent organizing his conquests, stamping out brigandage in Pontus and dismantling castles. That done, he marched south in 64 for Syria, where his lieutenants already held Antioch and Damascus, and had driven out invading Arabs. Only the Jews refused to bow to the new master. When Pompey arrived in 63 he laid siege to Jerusalem and in three months took it. He entered the temple and stalked into the Holy of Holies, and there—so the Jews always said—he lost his luck.

At Jericho, as he was marching south for Jerusalem, he had heard of the death of Mithradates in the Crimea. It was fifty-six years since he became king, and twenty-six since first he challenged Rome. He had given her more trouble than all the Eastern kings. Well might the messengers who bore the news to Jericho present themselves crowned with olive wreaths as though they told of a great victory.

Once more there was a great task of organization to be performed—boundaries to delimit, kings and governors to establish, taxes to fix and collect, new cities to build, old ones to set in the way of governing themselves after the Roman fashion. And all at Pompey's sole word. It was the work of an emperor—in Eastern eyes a god. Pompey's vanity—his great weakness—was flattered to the full: but through all he had been just and his demands had been moderate.

And now that the work was done he returned in the autumn of 62 to Italy at the head of an army wholly devoted to his interests. What would he do with it?

That was the question that all Rome had long been asking, and the answer was awaited with general anxiety. Would the Roman people still be free? Would there remain any opening for ambition and ability, any room for the genius of Caesar, who already knew himself an abler man than Pompey? Presently the answer came, and it was with amazed relief that Rome heard that the conqueror had dismissed his legions at Brundisium and was on his way to the city with only a small escort to attend him. Like Sulla he had flung back the burden and the cares of empire upon the incapable Senate. He was a great soldier till a greater flashed upon the world, but he was no statesman, and he liked his leisure. He delighted in flattery, in the pride of place and all the trappings of a great position, and he expected to receive in return for his great renunciation a deference never paid before to a returned proconsul. But the Senate did not know their friend and would not pay it. He desired a second consulship: they would not give it. The ten years' interval appointed by Sulla had not elapsed, and they would not exempt him from the rule. He wanted land for his veterans, but they took no steps to provide it. True, it was not easy, for Italy could no longer offer unoccupied or forfeit land. He expected confirmation of his far-reaching arrangements in the East, of treaties made, of boundaries fixed, of thrones established, of charters granted. But the majority of the Senate, jealous, ignorant, idle as ever, were incapable of understanding his great achievement, and it was not forthcoming. In amazement and disgust he turned to the Assembly, but the democratic leaders stood aloof and he lacked the arts of the politician. He was too haughty, he shunned the crowds and disliked the Forum. So within a few months the great conqueror found himself slighted, ignored, powerless, and began to look about for allies more expert than himself in the management of citizens and Senate who would obtain for him what he desired. There were two men who, if they would act with him, could do it—



Caesar and Crassus; and a third, Cicero, whose support was desirable if he would give it.

Rome had been through deep waters during the five years of Pompey's absence in the East. The war of party politics had been marked by even more than the ordinary heat and jobbery, and there was less regard than ever for the national welfare. The Senate at every election did their utmost to preserve and fortify the predominance of their exclusive order. At the moment it seemed to be threatened on the one hand by the unprecedented power of Pompey, on the other by the ambition of the popular advocate Cicero, the 'new man' who aspired to the consulship and in the way of whose candidature every possible obstacle was to be opposed. It is odd that the Senate should have seen enemies in these two men who would both die champions of their order.

The constant aim of the democratic party was to break down the authority of the Senate and exalt that of the Assembly. Their chiefs were Caesar and Crassus. Caesar's clear mind had long seen that it was vain to hope that the Senate would ever do its duty by the country. It cared nothing for the well-being of either Italy or the provinces. It did not understand, or so much as conceive that it was its duty to understand, what the people desired or needed. Caesar did understand: he made it his business; and by this time he was beyond doubt conscious that if he were given the chance he could reform the abuses which the Senate would never reform; conscious too of a consuming ambition that urged him on to win the office—the consulship—that would enable him to set his hand to the task. For after the consulship, if he played his cards rightly, would come a province and an army. An army there must be, or the Senate, sitting there eternal, would always in the long run be master of any individual magistrate. And he would not let his legions go like Pompey. But for the time it was a watchful Caesar, for he was no less anxious than the Senate to see how Pompey would use

his opportunity. And in 65 he was still only aedile, and an aedile crippled with debt. There was still the praetorship to win, with a province to follow. Meanwhile Crassus paid.

Marcus Licinius Crassus was born in 107 and so was five years Caesar's senior. He had done good service under Sulla in the Civil War, and all his days it was his ambition to make himself a famous name as a great general: but Sulla disliked his ways, which at times were crooked, and ceased to employ him, and he then turned to a business that he understood still better—that of making money. Not that he wanted to spend it, for he lived very simply; but money meant power, power that one day would win him a second consulship and enable him to play the general to the full height of his dreams. He had made great wealth during the Sullan proscriptions by buying up forfeited estates, many of which in the uncertainty of the times went, like that of Roscius, ridiculously cheap. And he saw and seized other opportunities of money-making—queer opportunities, some of them. Plutarch<sup>1</sup> gives a picturesque description of his ways. 'Observing,' he says, 'how extremely subject the city was to fire and falling down of houses, by reason of their height and standing so near together, he bought slaves that were builders and architects, and when he had collected these to the number of more than five hundred, he made it his practice to buy houses that were on fire, and those in the neighbourhood, which, in the immediate danger and uncertainty, the proprietors were willing to part with for little or nothing, so that the greatest part of Rome, at one time or other, came into his hands . . . Though he had many silver mines, and much valuable land, and labourers to work in it, yet all this was nothing in comparison of his slaves, such a number and variety did he possess of excellent readers, amanuenses, silver-smiths, stewards, and table-waiters, whose instruction he always attended to himself, superintending in person while they learned, and teaching them himself, accounting

<sup>1</sup> *Lives*, vol. ii, p. 273.

it the main duty of a master to look over the servants that are, indeed, the living tools of housekeeping; and in this, indeed, he was in the right, in thinking, that is, as he used to say, that servants ought to look after all other things, and the master after them.'

Crassus, too, was giving close and anxious attention to the course of politics, and particularly to Pompey's movements. For the time it looked too much as though there would be no room for him as a great soldier. Pompey blocked the way. With an eye to the future he neglected no art that would win him useful allies. It was said that he could address every citizen in Rome by name: slaves had been trained with care to prompt him. He was a banker and money-lender on an enormous scale, and half the Senate were in debt to him. To those who, like Caesar, could be useful his terms were easy: no interest was asked. He saw to it that he had friends among all the different factions. Though a senator himself, he generally acted with the knights, for their interests and his own were the same.

And there was another aspirant to power in Rome at this time, Lucius Sergius Catilina, a middle-aged man of noble birth, bold, reckless, unprincipled. He had been one of Sulla's creatures, and during the proscriptions he had made himself an evil name. He had killed his father-in-law with his own hand, and it was said that he had procured the insertion of his brother's name in the list of the proscribed. A man of wild, irregular life he was by this time overwhelmed with debt, and he had left the senatorial party to become a leader of the democratic opposition. As a politician he lived two lives, one open, comparatively respectable, in which he consorted with Caesar and Crassus and pursued his candidature for the consulship with their support, the other in an underworld of bankrupts, broken men, and criminals, where he plotted revolution with ruined nobles and the sons of the proscribed and landless veterans, and held out to them a fair promise of salvation in a regime of anarchic violence

that would herald a new proscription attended by an orgy of easy murder and public plunder, during which all private debts would be repudiated.

In 64 there were three candidates for the consulship, Catiline, his friend Caius Antonius—uncle of Caesar's Mark Antony—and Cicero, who had already broken with the democrats. The Senate had found it impossible to run candidates of their own, and lest a worse thing should happen supported Cicero, who was elected with Antonius for colleague. It was easy for Cicero to detach Antonius from Catiline by handing over to him the rich province of Macedonia. He would be too busy there getting rid of his load of debt to concern himself with democratic fantasies.

Catiline renewed his candidature in the following year, but was again defeated. As he could no longer hope to use the prestige and power of the consulship to overthrow the State he turned once more to his underworld and made preparations for an armed rising. But Cicero was his match. His spies were everywhere. Nothing that Catiline did escaped his knowledge. Every detail of his plans was known. At the end of October 63 a rebel army gathered in Etruria, and a week later the consul challenged Catiline at a meeting of the Senate in a great speech. The plot was exposed, and the same night Catiline fled to join the rebels. But he had left some confederates behind in Rome. It was known that they were deep in the plot, but there was not sufficient evidence to justify their arrest. Foremost among them was Publius Cornelius Lentulus, an ex-consul, one of the praetors for the year, an elegant, credulous, rather irresponsible man, who on the strength of a faked oracle believed that he was destined to play again the part of Sulla and Cinna—Cornelii all. One would have expected that with spies about and so much known the conspirators would have avoided any action that would bring Cicero down upon them. But no. There were some Transalpine Gauls in Rome, envoys of the Allobroges on a

mission to the Senate. Lentulus and his colleagues began to tamper with them. They were to bring their people into the conspiracy and raise cavalry for Catiline. When they asked for letters, the conspirators were mad enough to furnish them, and the Gauls by arrangement allowed themselves to be arrested with the letters on them. Here was all the evidence that was needed. Cicero at once sent for the conspirators and summoned the Senate. The letters were read and Lentulus and his colleagues—their guilt now beyond dispute—were committed to safe keeping till their fate should be decided. Cicero was accorded a vote of thanks, and there was a solemn thanksgiving to the gods by whose blessing he had saved city and people from fire and sword.

A day or two later the Senate met to determine the fate of the prisoners. The death sentence was proposed. Cicero recommended it, but Caesar took the line that no Roman, however notorious his guilt, could legally be put to death without a trial, and proposed perpetual imprisonment in chains. After a long debate the majority accepted the advice of Cicero and voted for death. It was the consul's duty to see to the execution of the sentence. He himself led Lentulus through the crowds to the old prison below the Capitol where Jugurtha and many another had died, and the other prisoners were fetched from their places of confinement. One by one they were lowered by ropes into the noisome pit and swiftly strangled. It was over. 'They have lived,' said Cicero to the watching people. It would have been ill-omened to say directly 'They are dead.' The people hailed him as their deliverer and called him 'Father of his Country,' a new style of honour that emperors would afterwards assume. But he had given a handle to his enemies, for he had put Roman citizens to death without a trial. On that charge a few years later he would be driven into exile, and none would lift a hand to help him.

• The exposure of the plot and the execution of the conspirators had its effect on Catiline's army. Desertion

set in: its numbers dwindled: the remnant was rounded up and cut to pieces, and Catiline fell fighting with a wild gallantry that would have become a worthier cause.

Rome had escaped the gravest peril, and Pompey, who had been waiting to be called home to save the country, found that he was no longer needed. When he came back he found the democrats under a cloud: the knights, in alarm at the threat of revolution, so bad for business, had withdrawn their support, and the Senate were firmly seated in control. But the tide turned. An opportunity offered of testing public opinion, and Caesar found that his personal popularity was unimpaired. It happened thus. The old Pontifex Maximus had died. The holder of the office was the head of the whole religious system of Rome. Among his more important duties was the control of the calendar, which was still strong magic and governed the ritual that had to be observed at all the recurring State ceremonies of the year—the religious festivals, the elections, the meetings of the law-courts and of the Assembly among them. Nothing could go on without him. It was a most distinguished position. A public residence was attached to it: there were revenues, and, above all, the person of the Pontifex was sacred—it was sacrilege to do him violence: though in these latter days the protection was not worth much. As a rule, the office was held by some grave, elderly senator of established reputation: but Caesar, a member of the priestly college since his youth, was eligible, and he resolved to stand for election. He spent an enormous sum—of borrowed money—on his candidature, but he hardly dared to hope that he would beat the Senate's unexceptionable candidate, and he told his mother as he left his house on the election day that if he were not chosen he should leave Rome for ever. To the general surprise he was successful. The omen was good. Shortly afterwards he was chosen praetor for 62. Then when Pompey early in 61 dismissed his legions at Brundisium the whole aspect of the political game was

altered. A clearer head than Pompey's might still win its way to the top where there was room again. The owner of that head was now in Further Spain as propraetor. He fought a little war for the first time and earned a triumph, which for tactical reasons he had to refuse.<sup>1</sup> He knew now that he had a gift for the business of war, and he had shown himself a shrewd, wise, kindly administrator. Soldiers liked him, for he was generous to them, and provincials, for he was just. And the legitimate perquisites attached to the office of governor under the system of the day sufficed to clear him of his monstrous debts. All might yet be well. The Senate could always be trusted to make the way of their opponents easy by their short-sighted folly, and, sure enough, they did. Not only had they alienated Pompey, but they had set the knights against them, too. The farmers of the taxes had discovered that in their eagerness to keep other bidders out they had paid too much for their contract with the State. No matter how they squeezed the unhappy provincials they must be losers. They asked that the terms might be reduced, but the Senate, despising tactics, or not understanding the need for them, refused, and the alliance of the orders—of nobles and knights—for which Cicero had worked so hard was shattered. The knights, led by Crassus, would look to the democrats for the relief that the Senate had refused.

In the summer of 60 Caesar was back in Rome and a candidate for the consulship, to which he was duly elected in spite of all the machinations of the Senate, whose lavish bribes, however, secured the election as his colleague of one Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus, an obstinate, uncompromising senatorian who opposed him at every turn, invoking the lightning for the purpose of obstruction when the Assembly met, and finally, as Caesar and Assembly ignored him altogether, shutting himself up permanently in his house 'to watch the sky,' so that the wits said the two consuls of the year were Julius and Caesar.

<sup>1</sup> He did not want to give up his army.

Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus now formed the alliance known as the First Triumvirate. United they were masters of the State—much to the dismay of Cicero, who had refused their invitation to join them—and Caesar as consul, with his army still outside the city, set about the fulfilment of his part of the bargain. Pompey's veterans, who had been hanging about the city living on the corn dole, got their farms. Since there was no longer any unoccupied land available, and confiscation was not to be thought of, in spite of senatorial obstruction, with which Caesar had a short way, as he had with a tribune who attempted to interpose his veto, land was bought by the State from private owners, and tenants were removed from the fertile public domains in Campania to make room for them. The immense new revenue derived from Pompey's conquests provided the money. And now at last Pompey's arrangements in the East were duly ratified, and to bind him still closer Caesar gave him in marriage his beautiful daughter Julia, whom he adored, and whom Pompey loved with a passionate devotion. While she lived the alliance between the two would hold.

For Crassus and his friends Caesar secured the passage through the Assembly of a bill that reduced their contract for the taxes by a third, and the millionaire was encouraged to expect in due course a second consulship and a great military command. At a later day Caesar would take measures to end the manifold iniquities of the farmers of the taxes; for the present he was contented with a law that checked the extortions of governors and their retinues.

Having done his part by his two allies he looked to them to help him to get what he wanted, and what he must have if he were not to be prosecuted at the end of his term of office for his summary dealing with the opposition to his measures, a province and a command for five years with wide powers like Pompey's. At the end of his term he hoped to be in a position to undertake the task that Sulla had laid down and Pompey had refused,



the remodelling of the constitution and the administrative system. The Senate already feared him, and they had attempted to prevent him from getting a province: they would have tied him for his year to administrative work in Italy. But the Triumvirate prevailed. The Assembly set aside the Senate's arrangement and gave him Cisalpine Gaul with Illyria for five years, to which the Senate, accepting the position, subsequently added Transalpine Gaul as well, with an army of four legions and the duty of its defence against a German invasion that was threatening.

At the beginning of 58 Caesar left for his new task, the conquest of Gaul, in whose fertile lands he would find the room for expansion that Italy could no longer provide, and a race still in its youth, eager and virile, and as yet undeveloped and unspoilt, that would rapidly absorb the Roman culture and acquire the Latin tongue, and as Romans by adoption, citizens proud of the Roman name, would take the place of the original stock, now worn out and wasted, as the guardians of their great inheritance.

To keep Cicero out of mischief, Caesar, always his friend, had offered him a position on his staff, but the orator would not accept it. He remained in Rome, but Pompey was there to watch him with Caesar's unprincipled and dissolute but very useful agent, the tribune Publius Clodius, a member of the Claudian house who had renounced his patrician status as Sulpicius had done in 88;<sup>1</sup> and in that same year 58 they drove him into exile for his part in the execution of Lentulus and his fellow conspirators.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 230.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### CICERO

It has been written that 'it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Rome of Cicero is as familiar to modern English readers as the London of Queen Anne. . . . We can still follow with unabated interest the daily fluctuations of its politics, the current gossip and scandal of its society, the passing fashions of domestic life as revealed in private correspondence or the disclosures of the law courts.'<sup>1</sup>

It is Cicero's great speeches and his eight hundred and fifty published letters that make those far-away days live again. The letters, which were preserved and published after his death by his devoted freedman Tiro, cover a period extending from the year 68 to within a few months of his death in 43.

Cicero himself had looked forward to such a publication. He knew that history would talk of him, and said so. He had thought of a mere modest six hundred years, but two thousand have passed and history is talking of him still. So he carries himself as befits a man whose actions will be subject to the verdict of posterity. Yet he never poses in his letters. They reveal the whole man without reserve, his littlenesses which we pity or deplore—his vanity and boastfulness—as well as the great qualities which we admire, and the charm that compels our liking as it compelled the liking and affection of his contemporaries.

More than half of the letters are addressed to his friend Titus Pomponius Atticus, who left Rome for Athens after the troubled days of 88, thinking that life and property would be safer there. As he was a man of sound judgment whose opinion the rather impetuous Cicero always

<sup>1</sup> Mackail, *Latin Literature*, p. 39.

liked to have about things that mattered to him, whether in the great world of politics or in the privacy of the home, he wrote to him frequently and told him all that was in his mind. And, being a prince of letter-writers, together with the things that mattered he poured out many that did not but that he knew would interest. So we learn that his predecessor as governor of Cilicia had simply ruined the province by his exactions, and that he himself had made £22,000 by legitimate pickings in his year of office—and Cicero was scrupulously honest: that Pomponia, the wife of his brother Quintus, was jealous of his freedman Statius, who was his man of business and had too great an influence with him: that he divorced her because she domineered and that, having tasted the joy of freedom from curtain lectures, he would certainly never marry again. We hear, too, that he liked Atticus to repeat to his friends any nice things that he said of them, not because they were true—for sometimes they were not—but because he hoped that those to whom they were repeated might live up to his supposed opinion of them—to his advantage. And we learn that his own wife Terentia was a rather difficult lady who liked to have her say about affairs of State, but was not at all willing that he should have his in domestic matters: and discover that his little son Marcus knew enough Greek at the age of six to write it. 'The little Cicero sends his love to Titus the Athenian,' runs the postscript to his father's letter written by the child in Greek.

Cicero had a lively sense of humour and could laugh at himself. When he first held office as quaestor in Sicily in 76 and did his work with an efficiency and justice that earned him the people's gratitude, he thought, as young men will, that all the great world of the capital had its eyes on him: and he tells us in the course of a speech how on his way back to Rome he learned at fashionable Puteoli that the great world hardly knew that he had been away, much less where he had been or what he had done.

Through all the centuries that have passed since he

thrilled Rome with the splendour of his oratory his great speeches have been a model to the law-courts and assemblies of the world. Many of the most famous speakers and letter-writers of the eighteenth century deliberately shaped themselves upon him, and Gladstone in the nineteenth still poured out the mighty torrent of balanced periods — parenthesis within parenthesis, qualification and enlargement—that came to an ordered end in a peroration of sustained eloquence and beauty. Great preachers within living memory have modelled themselves consciously or unconsciously on the same illustrious original. A more simple, direct, compact form of speech is cultivated to-day, but the style of Cicero's letters has never been surpassed, and it is not likely that it ever will be now the telephone has so largely taken the place of the pen, and life is lived at a pace that makes the writing of frequent letters almost impossible.

It was Cicero who in his many writings developed and enriched the Latin language and gave it the classic form which was to be the medium of all literary expression down the centuries, though the spoken tongue was soon to diverge widely from it. No more would poet have to complain as did Lucretius:

How hard it is in Latian verse  
To tell the dark discoveries of the Greeks,  
Chiefly because our pauper-speech must find  
Strange terms to fit the strangeness of the thing.<sup>1</sup>

It was a pauper-speech no longer. It could even shape itself now to dainty lyrics, and in these very days Quintus Valerius Catullus,<sup>2</sup> Tennyson's 'tenderest of Roman poets,' was writing his immortal love-songs. Yet one more may perhaps be added to the many attempts to translate into English verse the lovely lyric that he wrote to the notorious Clodia, sister of Caesar's jackal, to whom he had lost his heart, and who delighted for a while in the romance of the attachment. 'Lesbia' he called

<sup>1</sup> *Of the Nature of Things*, translated by Leonard, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 87-54 B.C.

her, but all the world knew (as doubtless she wished they should) who 'Lesbia' was.

## TO LESBIA

Sweet, Lesbia mine, oh, let us live to love  
While live we may.  
What our grave elders say  
Heed not, 'tis naught,  
Dear at a penny bought.  
The immortal sun  
Sinks but to rise again;  
But when our little day is done,  
And quenched our light,  
There will be only night.  
So kiss me, kiss;  
Kiss me a thousand times.  
Add thousands more—again—again.  
But spiteful jealousy  
Must never know their full delicious tale.  
We must confuse the count and cheat  
The evil eye—  
And even ourselves, my sweet.

The effect of Cicero's golden eloquence upon contemporary opinion was immense. His house on the Palatine hill was always crowded. 'There were not fewer daily appearing at his door, to do their court to him, than there were that came to Crassus for his riches, or to Pompey for his power amongst the soldiers, these being at that time the two men of the greatest repute and influence in Rome. Nay, even Pompey himself used to pay court to Cicero, and Cicero's public actions did much to establish Pompey's authority and reputation in the state.'<sup>1</sup>

Caesar himself courted him no less than Pompey, and not only because of his great influence upon Roman opinion—an influence that Caesar would have liked to have upon his side but could never win—but because he delighted in the society of one who intellectually was his peer. The fighting soldiers and greedy senators would never understand Caesar's mind and purpose: Cicero could, if he would.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. iii, p. 192.

But Cicero by now was a convinced republican. His mind was full of the glories of ancient days. He saw the Senate not as it really was but as it used to be—as he would have it be. He talked of Liberty in capital letters indifferent to the fact that as things were it meant no more than chaos. Better that senatorial governors should go on ruining their provinces if discipline and prosperity could only be secured at the price of an autocracy! Better the Senate and inefficiency, bad as that might be—and Cicero was under no illusions—than a systematized administration directed by a Caesar. So when Pompey, who had thought to use Caesar, broke with him after the death of Julia because he found that he was being used by him and was in danger of eclipse, Cicero threw in his lot with Pompey. Yet he knew quite well that Pompey was a poor leader to follow through the perilous maze of politics and civil war, and that neither in intellect nor force of character could he hold the field against his great rival. No man ever saw through Caesar. Like Shakespeare,

Others abide our question. Thou art free.  
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,  
Out-topping knowledge.

But the workings of Pompey's slow mind were exposed for all to see. The young wit hit him off exactly when he wrote to Cicero that it was his way to want one thing and say another, without being able to conceal what it was that he really wanted. But poor tin-god though Pompey was he had all Cicero's devotion. Yet Caesar had been, and to the end would be, far kinder to him than the aloof and haughty Pompey ever was or could be. Only once did Caesar let him be harmed in spite of repeated provocation. That was when Cicero would not act with the triumvirate and Caesar dared not leave him behind in Rome to make mischief while he was far away in Gaul. So he let Clodius drive him out of Italy and Pompey looked on. Even then in less than eighteen months he was permitted to return. He had learned his lesson for

## CHAPTER XXIX

### CAESAR

#### I. THE WAR IN GAUL

SOUTHERN Gaul had had its interest for the Romans from the days of Hannibal, because through it ran the land route to Spain which carried the communications of their armies there. And long before that time there had been friendly relations with the ancient Greek colony of Massilia, which, like other Greek cities, was glad to play off the Roman against the Carthaginian.

While Rome was busy conquering eastward, busy too with Spain, southern Gaul was used merely as a roadway, and the local tribes were kept in a good temper: there was no attempt at conquest. By the time of Caius Gracchus, however, more active measures had become necessary. In 125 the consul of the year punished some hill tribes that were giving trouble to Massilia, and, as usual, one expedition led to another. Aquae Sextiae (Aix) was founded north of Massilia, the Allobroges north of the Isère were defeated, and then the Arverni, at that time the most powerful of the tribes of Gaul—Auvergne preserves their name. The usual road was made, a fine road from Massilia to the foot of the Pyrenees. In 118 Narbo <sup>1</sup> was founded as a colony on the coast to the west where it bends southward, and shortly afterwards the new province of Gallia Narbonensis was constituted and organized—*Provincia Gallia Narbonensis*, or for short *Provincia*, Provence. It is the part of France where the seal of Rome was stamped most deeply, and where her memorials—bridges, aqueducts, amphitheatres, temples

<sup>1</sup> The modern Narbonne.

—are more numerous and splendid to this day than in any other Roman land outside Italy. At the end of the century the Province was already acting as a buffer to Italy. It took the first shock of the earliest German invasion: it saw the disaster at Arausio and the victory of Marius at Aix. Conquest led as always to the penetration of the trader, and the penetration of the trader led to further conquest. The ceaseless quarrels of the tribes invited and even compelled intervention, as they did in the Ireland of the Plantagenets and Tudors, and in eighteenth-century India. Always there was one that hated the foreigner less than its immediate neighbours,<sup>6</sup> and sought the help of Rome for the purpose of protection or revenge. There was no united Gallic nation.

During the Sullan proscriptions numbers of the democrats had fled for refuge to the Province as they had fled to Spain, and they found there a glorious country, in climate and fertility of soil comparable with their own. It, too, was a land of corn and wine and oil. And no raw colonial life awaited the emigrants, for in Massilia and her daughter cities they found the same Greek culture and way of life that they had left behind in Italy. But it was not long before it became plain that beyond the Rhine, north and east, there lay threatening a peril that Rome must one day grapple with or it would overwhelm first the Province and then Italy itself—the German peril. The Gauls would never overcome it unaided. Already the Germans were filtering in and settling in the north, and it was but a matter of time before they would absorb the whole country. But Rome had been torn by civil war, and then the pirates and Mithradates had claimed her attention, and the incapable Senate, who never looked ahead or faced a problem till it had grown to dimensions so formidable that it could not be neglected any longer, had been content to let the Province muddle along as best it could. All the time, however, its Romanization was proceeding and its wealth grew fast. Land was being bought by Roman capitalists:







Roman farmers and graziers had settled in large numbers: Roman traders and money-lenders swarmed about the country. The wine trade was already a gold mine for the Italian merchants: it was said that at times a jar of wine would buy a slave. And from trader and farmer the Gauls of the Province were rapidly picking up a corrupt form of Latin that centuries later would crystallize into the Old French.

Northward the lake of Geneva formed its boundary. On the east the Alps separated it from Cisalpine Gaul, now thoroughly Romanized. On the west it was covered from Geneva past Lugdunum (Lyons) and Vienna (Vienne) by the Rhône, and thence by the range of the Cevennes running south-west till the frontier turned west for Tolosa (Toulouse) and then ran down sharply south to the Pyrenees. Across the frontier beyond the Cevennes lay the Arverni. North of the Arverni and west of the Saône were the Aedui, who by Rome's help had supplanted the Arverni in the hegemony of Gaul, only to find themselves threatened in turn by the Sequani who occupied the fertile plains of the modern Burgundy between Saône and Rhône, and whose chief town was Vesontio—the modern Besançon. To aid them against the Aedui, the Arverni and Sequani had brought in King Ariovistus with some fifteen thousand Germans from beyond the Rhine, and of course these mercenaries, when they had fought their battles for them, in the usual fashion of successful mercenaries, claimed the fruits of victory for themselves. By 61 the Aedui were already paying them tribute, and had furnished hostages for their good behaviour: even the Sequani had been stripped of a third part of their territories and a great immigration of Germans had taken place. Meanwhile Divitiacus, the Aeduan chief who had been at the head of the pro-Roman party, had been exiled and had gone to Rome for help. The Senate's policy of drift had allowed a most dangerous position to mature, and the Province with only a single legion—the famous tenth—to protect it—was already

imperilled when Caesar arrived in the early spring of 58 to find that he had to face immediately another and still more pressing danger.

The country that lay beyond the lake of Geneva between the Rhône, the Rhine, and the Jura mountains—the north-west of the modern Switzerland—was inhabited by the warlike Helvetii, the most easterly clan of the Celts. These people, too, were feeling the pressure of the German tribes to the east of them, and they had resolved to leave their country and find a new home on the Biscay coast north of the mouth of the Garonne. Already they had burned their towns and villages and were on the move, a whole people with long trains of wagons loaded with their women and children and their movable possessions. The host numbered nearly 400,000 souls, of whom some 90,000 were warriors. By the middle of April 58 they had assembled near Geneva with the intention of crossing the Rhône and marching south along the river through Roman territory until they could strike westward beyond the Cevennes. To gain time Caesar opened negotiations with them, and meanwhile he destroyed the bridge over the Rhône at Geneva and fortified the left bank of the river for nineteen miles to prevent the crossing. When the Helvetii made their attempt they were beaten back, and they then turned west for the only alternative route, the difficult passage through the territory of the Sequani by the narrow gap between the Jura mountains and the Rhône. The Aeduan prince Dumnorix, the brother of the exiled Divitiacus, who headed the anti-Roman and nationalist party, prevailed upon the Sequani to let them pass. An easy passage through Gaul now seemed to be assured, but Caesar, although the Province was not now directly threatened, was resolved to prevent it, and while the Helvetii were winding their slow way with their train of wagons through the mountains he hurried back to Cisalpine Gaul to bring up the three legions which lay at Aquileia and two more that had been newly raised. At

high speed—for rapidity of movement was one of the chief elements of his success in war—he brought his army through the Alps, and while the summer was still young he left his province and overtook the Helvetii while they were crossing the Saône, which it had cost them twenty days to bridge. There he cut off and destroyed a division that was still on the left bank and then, himself bridging the river in a single day, he followed in pursuit of the main host, diverted it from its westward line of march, and pushed it north for fifteen days, keeping always about four miles behind and watching for an opportunity to strike. The appearance of his army had brought the Aedui over to his side and he now had with him a body of their cavalry. The untrustworthy Dumnorix commanded it, but he was less dangerous under Caesar's immediate eye than he would have been behind him. He contrived, however, to keep the Helvetii informed of the movements of the Roman army, and the supplies which the Aedui had promised began to fail. The position became critical, and when Caesar was abreast of the Aeduan capital, Bibracte — near the modern Autun — he was obliged to abandon the pursuit and turn aside to the town for supplies. The abandonment of the pursuit emboldened the Helvetii to attack. Caesar could have hoped for no better issue, and he awaited them in a strong position near the town. But his legions with the exception of the tenth were only partly trained and many of his officers were inexperienced and unreliable; so to show his men that he meant to stand with them and that there could be no retreat, he sent away his horse and the horses of his staff. The battle began at noon, but not till evening did the enemy show any sign of giving way, and it was night before the wagon-laager was stormed and the victory was complete. The losses of the Helvetii had been enormous, and as all their baggage train had been captured and supplies were unobtainable, they could no longer feed their host. Perforce they submitted and Caesar sent them back into Switzerland to hold their

country against the Germans, whom he was now about to teach a lesson.

In three months the Helvetii had been converted from dangerous enemies into a Roman garrison, and the Aedui, Arverni, and Sequani had been witnesses of the might of Rome. It was a new position for them. No wavering and uncertain Senate was now directing operations. Caesar knew his mind and he had taken his own course. He had not waited for the Senate to give him permission to leave his province and make war on the Helvetii beyond it, and now, once more on his own responsibility, he turned north-east to drive the Germans out of Gaul, where he would have no rival. Roman it should be. He had admired and liked the Gauls since the days when a Romanized Cisalpine Gaul had been his tutor. He understood them and he had no doubt that if he could prove himself a sure shield to the Aedui and Sequani against the Germans they would serve him. As a first measure—for he would not fight unless he must—he let Ariovistus know that no more Germans were to cross the Rhine and bade him restore their hostages to the Aedui and renounce their tribute. But the king was defiant and Caesar at once marched at top speed for Vesontio, which he was threatening, and occupied the town before he could reach it. Here was a much more formidable enemy than the Helvetii. The Italians were small men, and the huge Germans were giants in their imagination. A panic seized the army. But let Caesar tell the tale himself:

Whilst he [Caesar] is tarrying a few days at Vesontio, on account of corn and provisions; from the inquiries of our men and the reports of the Gauls and traders (who asserted that the Germans were men of huge stature, of incredible valour and practice in arms,—that oftentimes they, on encountering them, could not bear even their countenance, and the fierceness of their eyes)—so great a panic on a sudden seized the whole army, as to discompose the minds and spirits of all in no slight degree. This first arose from the tribunes of the soldiers, the prefects and the rest, who, having followed Caesar from the city [Rome] from motives of friendship, had no great experience in military affairs. And alleging,

some of them one reason, some another, which they said made it necessary for them to depart, they requested that by his consent they might be allowed to withdraw; some, influenced by shame, stayed behind in order that they might avoid the suspicion of cowardice. These could neither compose their countenance, nor even sometimes check their tears; but hidden in their tents, either bewailed their fate, or deplored with their comrades the general danger. Wills were sealed universally throughout the whole camp. . . . Some even declared to Caesar that when he gave orders for the camp to be moved and the troops to advance, the soldiers would not be obedient to the command, nor advance in consequence of their fear.<sup>1</sup>

Caesar at once called all the centurions together and 'set himself to restore confidence. At every crisis in his career his brilliant gift of speech—for as an orator he was second only to Cicero, though his style, terse, pointed, compelling, but never harsh, was widely different—enabled him to win his way straight to the soldier's heart. So now to close his speech he bade the centurions let the army know

that he would instantly set about what he had intended to put off till a more distant day, and would break up his camp the next night, in the fourth watch, that he might ascertain, as soon as possible, whether a sense of honour and duty, or whether fear had more influence with them. But that, if no one else should follow, yet he would go with only the tenth legion, of which he had no misgivings, and it should be his praetorian cohort.<sup>2</sup>

Of course the men of the tenth legion were delighted and vowed that they would go with him, and of course the rest were quick to say that they had meant no ill, and the advance began.

Ariovistus was now making for the famous Gap of Belfort between the Jura and the Vosges, the only way of entry into France from the upper Rhine.<sup>3</sup> Caesar, however, anticipated him and pressed eastward through the Gap until he came upon the Germans by the Rhine near Mülhausen. A futile conference was followed by some manœuvring for position which occupied several

<sup>1</sup> *De Bello Gallico*, book I, c. xxxix; Macdevitt's translation. pp. 22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, I. xl p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> To-day, as in 1914, impregnable.

days. Ariovistus succeeded in putting himself across Caesar's line of communications,<sup>1</sup> but by a brilliant feint Caesar alarmed him for the safety of his own, and when the king had strengthened his right wing to protect them he struck with all his might at the depleted left, which he routed and put to flight, the legionaries behaving with the utmost gallantry. Meanwhile, however, the weak Roman left wing was in difficulties till the young Publius Crassus, the triumvir's brave and able second son who was to fall with his father at Carrhae in 53, brought a reserve to its assistance and the Germans broke and fled. Few of the great host lived to cross the river.

The first year's campaign had ended. The centre and south of Gaul were already won. In his next campaign Caesar would strike at the Belgae of the north, whose various tribes inhabited the country between the Aisne and the mouths of the Rhine. Here again he was to find allies; for the Remi, who have given their name to the modern Rheims, had suffered at the hands of the masterful Suessiones (of Soissons) and would welcome the Roman alliance.

But there could be no movement of troops during the winter. Caesar quartered his army on the Sequani, whose invitation to the Germans had been the cause of all the trouble, and who now did what they could to make amends. Meanwhile, leaving Labienus in command, he went off, travelling his hundred miles a day in a little four-wheeled curricule, to deal with the accumulations of administrative and judicial work that awaited him as proconsul in Cisalpine Gaul. Winter after winter was similarly occupied there or in Illyria. The winter of 52-51, however, he was obliged to spend in Gaul, and as there were already signs of the coming breach with Pompey and the Senate he employed such leisure as he had in writing his famous *Commentaries*, which he published at once in order that the Roman world might have in briefest form the story of the conquest of Gaul with the

<sup>1</sup> And so cut him off from his supplies.



reasons that in his judgment justified his actions, and gave an answer to the critics in the Senate who had challenged so many of them. The title was a modest one. He regarded them as mere notes—original material for leisured writers to work up into their finished histories. But his genius as a writer matched his genius as a soldier, and Cicero for one realized at once that what he had written was written for all time: no other man could hope to tell the tale better than he had told it. And, though he was telling his own story, by general consent he told it as fairly and modestly as a man may. The facts were left to speak for themselves.

As soon as the winter was over he was back in Gaul and the campaign of 57 opened. Labienus had kept him informed of the threatening movements of the Belgae, and he had raised two more legions and now had eight. He marched unopposed from Besançon into Champagne, where he learned from the Remi that the Bellovaci (of Beauvais) and the Suessiones with kindred tribes to the number of 300,000 warriors—six times his own army—were moving to meet him. He therefore took up an impregnable position north of the Aisne to defend the line of the river, and waited till a diversion made by Divitiacus and his Aedui against the Bellovaci to the west, and the difficulty of feeding itself, compelled the great host to retreat and dissolved it into fragments. Then he struck, and great was the slaughter. The Roman loss was trivial. The Aedui and Remi pleaded for clemency to the Bellovaci and Suessiones, and Caesar was ready enough to show it. They surrendered their arms and gave hostages, and he marched on north-east to meet the more formidable Nervii on the Sambre in Belgium, against whom he had to fight one of the hardest of his battles. The enemy surprised the Romans while they were fortifying their camp, and there followed a confused and difficult struggle in which generalship could play little part. The victory was gained by the sheer grit and gallantry of the soldiers, to whom Caesar set a

glorious example. Snatching a shield from a legionary he fought in the ranks with them, and hastened from one danger-point to another to cheer and steady them. There might well have been a disaster like that of Cannae, but gradually the entangled legions worked themselves clear, and when the tenth was sent by Labienus to the rescue the Nervii in turn were taken in the rear. Then the tide turned and their army, which resisted to the death, was almost annihilated. When the people sent ambassadors to Caesar to make surrender they told him that of their six hundred senators only three survived, and that out of an army of sixty thousand there were scarcely five hundred left unwounded. Whereupon

Caesar, that he might appear to use compassion towards the wretched and suppliant, most carefully spared [them]; and ordered them to enjoy their own territories and towns, and commanded their neighbours that they should restrain themselves and their dependants from offering injury or outrage to them.<sup>1</sup>

He admired a gallant enemy. But when treachery was shown he could be ruthless. The Aduatuci had been too late to take part in the great battle, and Caesar marched on to besiege their town. From the walls their warriors mocked the Romans as they built their great battering-rams, asking:

‘For what purpose was so vast a machine constructed at so great a distance?’ ‘With what hands or with what strength did they, men of such small stature’ (for our shortness of stature, in comparison with the great size of their bodies, is generally a subject of much contempt to the men of Gaul), ‘trust to place against their walls a tower of such great weight?’<sup>2</sup>

But for all the mockery of the Aduatuci the famous Roman siege train was quickly in position, and they made haste to surrender when Caesar offered them the same terms and protection that he had given the Nervii. But they played him false. They kept back a large part of their arms and made a surprise attack upon the Romans, who, however, were not so unprepared as they had expected.

<sup>1</sup>*De Bello Gallico*, II. xxviii, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>*Ib.*, II. xxx, p. 47.

After a stiff fight they were beaten: the gates of the town were forced, and the whole population, to the number of 53,000 persons, was sold into slavery. It was a lesson.

Meanwhile, Publius Crassus with one legion had received the submission of the whole of the West to the Atlantic coast. The campaign of 57 was over. All Gaul for the moment was subdued, and even the Germans beyond the Rhine were offering to give hostages for good behaviour. Well might the Senate, on receiving Caesar's dispatches, decree a thanksgiving of fifteen days for the great achievement, an honour, says Caesar quietly, which before that time had been conferred on none.' Pompey himself for his conquest of Mithradates had had but ten.

The winter of 57-56 Caesar spent in Illyria, but with the approach of spring he came down to Ravenna, at the southern extremity of his province, to watch the disquieting course of affairs at Rome. Now that he was no longer there to control them the democrats had got completely out of hand. The excesses of the reckless Clodius and his gang of armed retainers had gone beyond all bounds and respectable citizens were weary and ashamed of them. The narrow-minded and pedantic Marcus Porcius Cato, who modelled himself ostentatiously on his great ancestor and who, if he could help it, would neither wear nor eat nor think nor do anything that varied by one iota from what was the habit of the most strait-laced senator when Hannibal was still in Italy, had actually been blockaded in his garden and dared not move abroad. An obstinate, unbending republican rooted in his absurd reverence for old worn-out forms, he was the one man whom even the tolerant Caesar could not abide. He had been got rid of when Cicero was banished by sending him as governor to Cyprus, but now he was back again and this was Clodius's way of dealing with him. The other two triumvirs were powerless without their great colleague and only his influence could ever persuade them to act together.

Pompey was becoming more and more dissatisfied with his position. He was tired of inaction. He wanted place and he wanted power—office and an army. The Senate gave him office. Corn was scarce and dear again, and on the motion of Cicero, just back from exile, they put him in charge of the corn supply with proconsular powers for five years. But Pompey wanted a more imposing mission than the organization of a steady stream of corn ships and the detection and punishment of the rogues who produced an artificial scarcity in order to run up the price. When, however, he tried to persuade the Senate to send him to Egypt with an army they would not hear of it and—hypocrites that they were—they produced testimony from the Sibylline Books to show why it should not be done, instead of saying honestly that they were afraid to arm him.

In spite of Caesar's streams of gold and the splendour of his gifts to the city—the public buildings that were going up and the amusements that he paid for—the tide of feeling seemed to be setting against him. The elections went wrong, and there was ominous talk among the republican group of senators of proposing his recall. Plainly it was time that he took a personal hand in things, so, as he might not leave his province, he called a conference at Lucca, a frontier town in Cisalpine Gaul near the head of the gulf of Genoa, where he was joined by Pompey and Crassus and a company of two hundred senators, and there the tangle was straightened out to the satisfaction of all three. Pompey was to have the two Spanish provinces for five years with an army, and leave to administer them from Rome by deputy. Crassus was to have Syria and the command in the war with Parthia which it was seen must come; and the two should be consuls for 55. As for Caesar himself he was content with the extension of his command in Gaul for a further term of five years with ten legions. The Assembly would ratify the pact and the Senate would have to accept it. Caesar, it is true, had armed his

prospective rival, but for the moment he had satisfied him. Pompey was in high good humour and, with her dear ones reconciled, Julia was happy. The future must take care of itself.

As soon as this difficult business was finished Caesar set off for Gaul and joined his main army, which was now on the Atlantic coast of Brittany, where the Veneti and their confederate tribes were giving trouble. At the close of the campaign of 57 they had submitted, but during the winter they laid hands on Caesar's envoys who were arranging for the supply of corn to the army. Their neighbours were persuaded to do the same thing and the whole coast rose. They were good seamen and their formidable navy, acting in co-operation with their land forces, succeeded in nullifying the efforts of the legions. It therefore became necessary to challenge it. A fleet was got together and put under the command of the young Decimus Brutus, a trusted officer, able and devoted, who after long service was in the end to join the conspirators against his chief and decoy him to his death on the fatal Ides of March.

On the rough waters of the Atlantic the low, lightly-built, oar-driven galleys of the Romans were no match for the stout sailing vessels of the Gauls that towered above them, and when battle was joined Brutus found himself at a disadvantage. But his luck—Caesar's luck—held. The winds turned Roman and betook themselves to sleep. The enemy's tall ships wallowed helpless on the swell while the galleys manœuvred at their will. Roman ingenuity did the rest.

One thing provided by our men was of great service, namely, sharp hooks inserted into and fastened upon poles. When the ropes which fastened the sail-yards to the masts were caught by them and pulled, and our vessel vigorously impelled with the oars, they were severed; and the yards necessarily fell down; so that as all the hope of the Gallic vessels depended on their sails and rigging, the entire management of the ships was taken from them. The rest of the contest depended on courage; in which our men decidedly had the advantage; and the more so because the whole

action was carried on in the sight of Caesar and the entire army; so that no act, a little more valiant than ordinary, could pass unobserved.<sup>1</sup>

The battle, which lasted from mid-morning till sunset, ended in a complete victory for the Romans. It was the end of the rebellion, and the Veneti

surrendered themselves and all their possessions to Caesar, on whom Caesar thought that punishment should be inflicted the more severely, in order that for the future the rights of ambassadors might be more carefully respected by barbarians: having, therefore, put to death all their senate, he sold the rest for slaves.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile Labienus had been keeping watch upon the Belgae and the Germans in the north: Publius Crassus had subdued Aquitaine to the foot of the Pyrenees, and a third general, Quintus Titurius Sabinus, had dealt effectively with the tribes of the Channel coast—the future Normandy. After some minor operations about the Belgian frontier the campaign of 56 came to an end. The conquest seemed to be complete.

In the following year the formidable Germans of the lower Rhine were dealt with. The campaign opened early. Two tribes, the Usipetes and Tencteri, driven on by the more powerful Suevi (Swabians) behind them, had crossed the river with an enormous host. If the Germans were not taught to respect the river boundary there would be no peace in northern Gaul. At first they seemed anxious to avoid a conflict and there were negotiations. But Caesar had reason to suspect that they were being used as a mere pretext for delay till an important reinforcement had arrived, and when one day a treacherous attack was made upon his unsuspecting Gallic cavalry he resolved to strike at once. Then, as he puts it,

a very seasonable event occurred, namely, that on the morning of the next day, a large body of Germans, consisting of their princes and old men, came to the camp to him to practise the same treachery and dissimulation; but, as they asserted, for the purpose of acquitting themselves for having engaged in a skirmish

<sup>1</sup> *De Bello Gallico*, III. xiv, p. 57 (slightly abbreviated).

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, III. xvi, p. 58.

the day before, contrary to what had been agreed and to what, indeed, they themselves had requested; and also if they could by any means obtain a truce by deceiving him. Caesar, rejoicing that they had fallen into his power, ordered them to be detained.<sup>1</sup>

By a forced march he surprised the now unsuspecting Germans in their camp and let loose the excited and indignant legions on them. They were cut down *en masse*, men, women, and children. The few survivors perished in an attempt to swim the Rhine. Treachery had been repaid in its own coin and a host of four hundred and thirty thousand souls had been wiped out at trivial cost. But the humanitarians of the Senate—or those who for political purposes found it convenient to pose as such—were loud in protest, and the virtuous Cato went the length of proposing that Caesar should be given up to the Germans in atonement.

To advertise still more widely the might of Rome and the wisdom of accepting the Rhine as a boundary not to be transgressed, Caesar resolved to show himself across the river. He bridged it by a magnificent feat of engineering apparently not far from the modern Bonn, and when he led the legions over, the Germans fled for refuge to their forests. During a stay of eighteen days he burnt their villages and cut their corn, and then, when he was satisfied with the effect he had produced, he recrossed the river and destroyed the bridge.

Late in August of the same year he crossed to Britain with two legions and some cavalry, impelled perhaps as much by his passion for discovery, geographical and anthropological, as by his desire to teach the Britons not to meddle on the continent. The force was too small and the expedition was a failure. In the spring of 54 he therefore crossed again, this time with five legions and two thousand cavalry. He passed over the Thames and secured the submission of Cassivelaunus, whose capital was near St. Albans, and, after imposing a tribute upon the country and bidding Cassivelaunus not to harm the

<sup>1</sup> *De Bello Gallico*, iv. xiii, pp. 70, 71.

Trinobantes of the modern Essex who had given him aid, he withdrew to Gaul before the summer ended. The expedition, like the crossing of the Rhine, was the talk of Rome. It was always well to impress the capital. The promised tribute, however, was certainly never paid.

Caesar had thought that Gaul was conquered and that he would be able to devote the remainder of his ten years' term of office to the steady development and Romanization of the country, but he was to be disappointed. While he had been absent in Britain plans were forming for a widespread rising. The first outbreak occurred towards the end of the year. The harvest had been bad, and the winter quarters of the legions were of necessity strung out widely across the north of France. Caesar, who fortunately had not yet left the country, was at Amiens, where a single legion lay: Labienus was near Sedan, Quintus Cicero at Charleroi among the Nervii: there was a legion north of the Scheldt, a legion and a half at Aduatuca near Liège under Sabinus and Cotta, one was as far away as Brittany, three lay quartered at different stations within a day's march of Amiens. Suddenly Aduatuca was attacked. Sabinus was persuaded to leave the town and march under the treacherous pretence of a safe-conduct to join Labienus, but his men had not gone two miles before they found themselves in a trap, and the whole force was cut to pieces. Then Quintus Cicero was assailed. The enemy tried to trick him into evacuating his camp as they had tricked Sabinus, but his reply was the time-honoured reply of the Roman—he would not negotiate with an enemy in arms—and the Gauls proceeded to besiege him closely, using the new devices that they had learned from the Romans. The hutments and stores of the legion were burnt by showers of fireballs; nine men out of every ten were killed or wounded, but still the defence held. Messengers sent to call Caesar to the rescue were captured one after another till at last a Gallic deserter got through with a letter bound about his javelin, and one morning a few days later a spear was



found stuck in one of the wooden towers of the camp with a message in Greek tied to it announcing Caesar's approach. The soldier who found it—it had been there two days before it was discovered—took it at once to Cicero, who read it to his gallant remnant. At the same time the smoke of burning villages was seen in the distance and the besiegers marched off to face the two legions which Caesar had hurriedly assembled. As his little force was much too weak to attack, for he was outnumbered by eight to one, he lured the Gauls into delivering an assault upon his camp and there with his steady veterans he smote them to destruction.

For the time the storm died down, but it was an anxious winter and Caesar did not dare to leave the army. He knew that plotting was going on all round him. Only the Aedui and the Remi were to be relied upon. He raised two new legions in Cisalpine Gaul and borrowed a third from Pompey for the work before him. Most of the summer of 53 was spent in suppressing the northern rebellion and punishing those responsible for it, and then the Rhine was crossed again to reinforce his former lesson. Towards the end of the year it seemed safe to revisit Cisalpine Gaul, where, while attending to his administrative and judicial duties, he would be able to keep a closer eye upon what was happening in Rome. For things were not going well. Julia had died late in 54 and Pompey had refused the hand of Caesar's great-niece Octavia, Antony's future wife. Worse than that, he had married the daughter of Metellus Scipio, one of the leaders of the senatorial opposition, and was obviously drifting into opposition himself. Crassus had perished miserably with three-fourths of his army at Carrhae amid the desert sands beyond Euphrates in the early summer, victims of the new tactics of the Parthian horsemen, who shot their clouds of arrows from the saddle, and he was no longer available as make-weight or as mediator. It would have been better for every one if he had stuck to money-making. Clodius and his rival Milo, whom Pompey had

taken up, were battling in the streets, and blood was shed daily till Clodius was killed in a brawl on the Appian Way a few miles out of Rome—a loss to Caesar. In the general confusion it had been impossible to hold the consular elections and Pompey was made sole consul by the Senate to restore order. Milo, found guilty of the murder of Clodius, went off to exile in Massilia, there to enjoy the mullets which he said he would never have tasted if Cicero had had the nerve amidst the tumultuary surroundings of the trial to deliver in his defence the convincing speech which he had planned and had now published. But ere that had happened news had reached Caesar early in February 52 that called him back post-haste to Gaul. For at last the Gauls had awakened to a consciousness of their common race. For the first time they acted as a nation. Seizing the opportunity afforded by Caesar's absence and his political embarrassment, as to which they were well informed, they burst into general revolt under the leadership of Vercingetorix, a young Arvernian noble whose father had once been chief of all Gaul.

The signal was given by the Carnutes of Genabum across the Loire, who seized and massacred the Roman traders there. The news was spread by the primitive telegraphy common still among native tribes, and was known the same evening among the Arverni a hundred and sixty miles away. At once the whole country was ablaze; even the faithful Aedui wavered. It was the purpose of Vercingetorix to separate Caesar from his legions, most of which were in winter quarters on the upper Seine, but his ingenious plan was defeated by Caesar's speed and daring. It was his way in a dangerous emergency to do the thing his enemies were certain was impossible. Because they were so sure he could not do it, it became the very thing to do—perilous, but the least perilous of desperate alternatives. With a small force he cut his way through the snows of the Cevennes and appeared suddenly in Auvergne, the heart of the enemy's country where he was least expected. Vercingetorix and

his army were away upon the Loire. Here was a bait for them. They rose to it at once and Decimus Brutus was left to play it while Caesar, hiding his true purpose even from him, raced off almost alone for Vienne. There he joined a body of cavalry that on his arrival in the Province he had sent on in advance and, while Vercingetorix was moving south to find only an elusive Brutus, he rode hard north night and day up the valley of the Saône through the Aeduan territory till he joined his two nearest legions almost two hundred miles away among the Lingones (Langres). Before Vercingetorix had heard where he was he had concentrated ten legions, and the first round was won. But now his real difficulties began. Wherever he went Vercingetorix hung about him with a cloud of cavalry and made foraging impossible. He could not face the legions in a pitched battle, but he believed that he could starve them. So that they should not be able to procure supplies by the capture of towns and villages he persuaded the inhabitants to burn them and destroy all stores that they could not carry away. But they could not bear the thought of burning the almost impregnable Avaricum (Bourges), the finest city in Gaul, and Vercingetorix against his better judgment spared it. At once Caesar swooped down and laid siege to it. But he could get no corn—not even from the Aedui—and the soldiers before long were almost starving. To end their sufferings he proposed to raise the siege, but they would not hear of it. By this time the Gauls had learnt how to meet the Roman siege works, and they resisted with a skill and heroism that earned Caesar's praise. But their efforts were vain. Before a month was out the walls had been stormed and the soldiers, excited by the massacre at Genabum and the fatigue of the siege, spared neither those worn out with years, women, or children. Finally, out of all that number, which amounted to about forty thousand, scarcely eight hundred, who fled from the town when they heard the first alarm, reached Vercingetorix in safety.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *De Bello Gallico*, vii. xxviii, p. 148.

Caesar now marched for Gergovia,<sup>1</sup> the Arvernian capital, perched upon a hill-top, into which Vercingetorix had thrown himself with a great army, abandoning his own wise strategy. Caesar attempted a blockade but he had only six legions with him—not enough for the task. An assault was beaten off with heavy loss and he had to withdraw, defeated for the first time. Now even the Aedui revolted and the Province itself was in danger. But Caesar dared not retreat to cover it, for Labienus with four legions was in a difficult position on the Seine, and it was necessary to relieve him—necessary, too, above all to concentrate the army and not divide it. That done, Caesar, now reinforced by a contingent of German cavalry to make good the defection of his Gallic horse, could move south-east for the country of the Sequani to cover the Province. Vercingetorix attacked him on the march but was beaten off with heavy loss and, led astray by his success at Gergovia, threw himself into Alesia (Mont Auxois) hard by, a hill-fortress stronger still above the river Brenne. Caesar drew his lines round the hill, which at its base has a circumference of six miles, and pressed the siege. Vercingetorix sent out a call for help. A great army said to have numbered 250,000 gathered for his relief and in its turn ringed Caesar round. But the legions with steady gallantry faced both ways, and before long Alesia felt the pinch of famine. There was only corn for thirty days when the siege began. To eke it out all non-combatants, old men, women, and children, were now driven out of the town. Caesar would not let them through his lines and they perished miserably below the walls. Meanwhile two fierce assaults of the relieving army were beaten off, and then a long day of desperate fighting on both fronts ended in its ruinous defeat. The doom of Alesia was sealed. Vercingetorix called his council together. He had fought, he told them, for no end of his own but only that he might free his country, and he now offered himself

<sup>1</sup> It retains the same name still.

as a victim to atone to the Romans for the rebellion that he had promoted. His people might kill him or give him up to Caesar as they pleased. It was decided that he should give himself up and appeal on their behalf for mercy. So Vercingetorix,

putting his best armour on, and adorning his horse, rode out of the gates, and made a turn about Caesar as he was sitting, then quitting his horse, threw off his armour, and remained quietly sitting at Caesar's feet until he was led away to be reserved for the triumph.<sup>1</sup>

The collapse of the rebellion was now assured. It only remained to stamp out the embers and pacify the country. Caesar himself supervised the work and it was well and wisely done, though not without stern measures on occasion. At Uxellodunum in the south a grim penalty was inflicted, for

Caesar, being convinced that his lenity was known to all men, and being under no fears of being thought to act severely from a natural cruelty, and perceiving that there would be no end to his troubles if several states should attempt to rebel in like manner and in different places, resolved to deter others by inflicting an exemplary punishment on these. Accordingly he cut off the hands of those who had borne arms against him. Their lives he spared, that the punishment of their rebellion might be the more conspicuous.<sup>2</sup>

Not until the spring of 50 did Caesar find it possible to visit Cisalpine Gaul. The Gauls rose no more. When the Civil War broke out in 49 they stood loyally by their conqueror.

The triumph was not celebrated until June 46. Then Vercingetorix was brought out of his prison to adorn it, and as soon as it was over he was numbered among the many victims of the ancient dungeon whose greedy maw always opened to receive the noblest of Rome's beaten enemies. There was no pity, no chivalrous respect, for the heroic leader—not even in Caesar, the most merciful of Romans.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. ii, p. 551.

<sup>2</sup> *De Bello Gallico*, VIII. xlv, pp. 199, 200.

## II. THE CIVIL WAR AND AFTER,

By the year 50 nothing but Caesar's complete and utter ruin would content Pompey and the Senate, and they had laid their plans. Though the ten years of his proconsulship would expire on 1st March 49, it had been previously arranged that he should continue to hold office until the end of the year, by which time he would have been elected consul for 48. In that way he would be continuously protected against the prosecution which his political enemies would certainly initiate if his command lapsed and he became for a period a private citizen. And with enemies minded like Cato exile was the least that he could expect: it was more likely that death would be his lot. It had also been arranged with Pompey that he should be allowed to stand for the consulship without coming to Rome to make the personal canvass that the old rule required. He had given up his army and his triumph in 60 in order to comply with it, but it would be madness to come to Rome defenceless now. By the spring of 50, however, Pompey, acting with his enemies, had gone back on both arrangements. The proconsulship would terminate on 1st March 49, and Caesar, if he wished to be consul in 48, must come to Rome and make his personal canvass in the summer as a private citizen. It was a challenge by those who believed they could compel submission.

But Caesar still tried to reach an amicable settlement. He did not want to fight: the idea of civil war was abhorrent to him. He offered to surrender province and army if Pompey would do the same, but Pompey would not. He complied at once with an order of the Senate that he should give up one of his legions for the contemplated war with Parthia. Pompey was to give up one also, but he called on Caesar to return the legion he had lent him in the difficult winter of 54-53 and Caesar sent that too. Nothing more was heard, however, of

Parthia, and Pompey kept both legions. Through his agents in the Senate Caesar continued to do his best to find a way to a peaceful settlement, but all attempts were defeated and on 7th January 49 the Senate, adopting the ancient formula last employed to empower Cicero to take action against the Catilinarian conspirators, instructed the consuls to see that the Republic took no hurt. It was a declaration of war—and by the Senate, who now proceeded to put all the resources of the State, both in men and money, at the disposal of Pompey for its prosecution.

Events now moved rapidly. Caesar's immediate reply was to send to Gaul for his legions and with the sixth, which alone he had with him, he crossed the Rubicon, the little stream that separated his province from Italy proper. He pushed steadily south along the coast of the Adriatic, taking one town after another, but he still continued his efforts for peace. He tried to persuade Pompey to meet him, but Pompey would not, and he pressed on. Before his rapid advance Pompey and the leaders of the senatorial party now fled south for Brundisium. At Corfinium—the sometime Italica—Caesar cut off Domitius Ahenobarbus, who had been sent there to collect troops and had stayed too long. When he surrendered he was treated with the considerate courtesy which Caesar showed to all the Pompeians who fell into his hands: even the large sum of public money which Domitius had with him was restored to him. The captured troops willingly enlisted in Caesar's army: he compelled none to join. He refused to imitate the cruelty of Marius and Sulla. He would conquer by a new way, as he said in a proclamation: compassion and generosity should be his weapons. When Domitius and others whom he had released went off ungraciously to join Pompey and once more fight against him he showed no resentment. 'I must act as my nature bids me,' he wrote to Cicero: 'they as theirs bids them.' His compassion and generosity had their reward. The people

everywhere came over to him, though the nobles and the senatorial majority still looked upon him as a Catiline. If bankrupts and criminals had expected a time of licence they were disappointed: he would permit no violence, no disorder. In March Pompey quitted Italy and crossed to Epirus with his army, which though more numerous than Caesar's was raw and no match for his veterans. Caesar went to Rome to arrange for the administration of the country, re-establish credit—always imperilled by civil war—and remove the alarms of the well-to-do. Then early in April he set out for Spain to free his western flank before he dealt with Pompey east of him beyond the Adriatic.

Spain was held for Pompey by his lieutenants Afranius and Petreius. Though Petreius had behaved treacherously and, while the armies were fraternizing, had seized a number of Caesar's men and put them to death, no vengeance was taken. Caesar only required the generals to disband their army and quit Spain. The rank and file he supplied with corn and gave them the pay due to them and let them go. Massilia, which had been occupied by Domitius Ahenobarbus, was recaptured: Sardinia and Sicily were secured: and though Africa fell to the republicans, and Pompey at Dyrrhachium was master of the East and held the sea with his superior fleet, Rome could now be fed. It was Pompey's intention to come back and reconquer Italy in the spring of 48, but Caesar anticipated him and, eluding his fleet, crossed from Brundisium at the beginning of January. He landed on the coast about a hundred miles south of Dyrrhachium and at once marched north. Though he was but 20,000 strong against 50,000 he attempted and for a time succeeded in shutting up Pompey—with whom was Labienus, once his own trusted general—in Dyrrhachium; and when May came and no result had been obtained he assailed his lines, but suffered a severe defeat. In Caesar's judgment, if Pompey had followed up his victory he must have won the campaign, but Pompey was



too slow. Caesar now set himself to draw Pompey away from the sea and the cover of his fleet. With that object he sent two legions under Domitius Calvinus east along the great Egnatian Way into Macedonia as a threat to reinforcements which Pompey was expecting from that quarter. Pompey was drawn, and followed to protect them. Domitius adroitly extricated himself from a position of some danger between the two forces and presently the rival armies found themselves once more facing each other near Pharsalia in the plain of Thessaly.

Pompey knew that his legions, largely recruited in the East, were not the equals man for man of Caesar's splendid veterans, raised most of them in Cisalpine Gaul, and he was by no means anxious to fight a decisive battle. It was his purpose to use his greatly superior numbers, and above all his superior cavalry, to wear Caesar out and cut him off from supplies. But Pompey was not his own master. The young nobles with him were certain that they had Caesar beaten and they forced the pace. They even began to divide up the bearskin before they had killed the bear.

Whenever Pompey acted with slowness and caution [says Caesar], they used to exclaim that it was the business only of a single day, but that he had a passion for power, and was delighted in having persons of consular and praetorian rank in the number of his slaves. And they now began to dispute openly about rewards and priesthods, and disposed of the consulate for several years to come. Others put in their claims for the houses and properties of all who were in Caesar's camp. . . . In short, Pompey's whole army talked of nothing but the honours or sums of money which were to be their rewards, or of vengeance on their enemies; and never considered how they were to defeat their enemies, but in what manner they should use their victory.<sup>1</sup>

So Pompey attacked on 9th August 48 and suffered a ruinous defeat. The killed and wounded numbered 15,000, and 24,000 prisoners were taken. Pompey rode hard for the coast, crossed the Aegean to Mytilene and there took ship for Egypt, where he was murdered as he landed.

<sup>1</sup>*De Bello Civili*, III. lxxxii, lxxxiii, pp. 312, 313.

Caesar fighting for his life had gained the mastery. It was now but a matter of time and the world would be at his feet. But he grudged the heavy price of victory—the terrible toll of Roman lives.

‘Caesar, when he came to view Pompey’s camp,’ says Plutarch, ‘and saw some of his opponents dead upon the ground, others dying, said, with a groan: “This they would have; they brought me to this necessity. I, Caius Caesar, after succeeding in so many wars, had been condemned had I dismissed my army.” These words, Pollio<sup>1</sup> says, Caesar spoke in Latin at that time, and that he himself wrote them in Greek.’<sup>2</sup>

With a small force Caesar followed early in October to Egypt in pursuit of Pompey, and heard with grief on landing of his tragic end. At Alexandria he was drawn into the quarrel between the young Ptolemy and his sister Cleopatra, and he remained in Egypt, not yet a Roman province though under Roman influence, until the following June. For some months he was besieged in the palace area by the boy king’s force until he was relieved by Mithradates of Pergamus, said to be a son of the great Mithradates, and Ptolemy lost his life in the battle which made Caesar master of Egypt at the end of March 47. When he left Cleopatra, the enchantress, in June he resumed his old activity and sped swiftly through Syria, straightening out all tangles; sailed thence to Tarsus in Cilicia and did the same there, and then marched up through Asia Minor into Pontus, where he tumbled the rebel Pharnaces from the throne of his father Mithradates, which he had recovered in the confusion of the times. It cost but a few minutes to destroy his army. ‘Veni, vidi, vici,’<sup>3</sup> wrote Caesar to a friend. In September he was back in Rome, where disorder and bloodshed had reappeared under the rule of Antony. There too the tangles were straightened out by the master hand, and after three months of hard work Caesar was ready to

<sup>1</sup> Asinius Pollio the historian, who was with Caesar.

<sup>2</sup> *Lives*, vol. ii, p. 564.

<sup>3</sup> I came, I saw, I conquered.

embark for the province of Africa, which was held by the republicans under Metellus Scipio and Cato, with the experienced 'soldier Labienus to advise them and the savage Juba, king of Numidia, for an ally.

But Caesar had had first of all to deal with a serious mutiny among the troops. Even the faithful tenth legion was implicated. The soldiers had been living at ease in Campania while he was away in Egypt and the East, and were tired of war. Their officers had lost control, and when orders came to embark for Sicily preparatory to sailing for Africa the legions refused to obey and marched for Rome. There Caesar met them fearlessly and asked what they wanted. Discharge, they said. At once he granted it. 'Citizens,' he called them, no longer 'fellow soldiers'; and he told them that when he came back from Africa to celebrate his triumph—a triumph in which now they would not share—they should have the presents and the lands that had been promised them. It was enough. They had not dreamed that Caesar would go without them. Citizens! No share in the triumph! It was not to be borne, and in a few minutes they were begging him to take them back into his favour and call them his soldiers again. Such was the magic of Caesar's presence and his speech.

On 1st January 46 he landed in Africa. His difficulties at first were great, for his fleet had been scattered by a storm. For some time the enemy were dangerously superior in numbers, and supplies were so short that the horses of the cavalry were reduced to seaweed for fodder. Not until April was it possible to concentrate his forces. Then he struck at Thapsus, but in the battle that followed, though the plan was his, he took no part: one of his attacks of epilepsy had seized him. The victory was complete, and a terrible butchery followed, a butchery of Roman soldiers that he would have done anything to avert. But the enemy had been guilty of brutal cruelty and Caesar's legions were tired of his patience and large humanity. They got out of hand: even those who

surrendered were put to the sword. They were growing weary of war and perhaps they thought that their method was more likely to end it than their general's way of dealing with captured enemies which left them free to fight again. After the battle Caesar went on to Utica, and Cato, who commanded there, knowing that resistance was hopeless, fell upon his sword. He would not accept life from Caesar. The Republic was dead and he would die with it.

In July Caesar was in Rome again. There among other tasks he undertook the reform of the calendar—long needed, but always a difficult and unpopular operation. Sixty-seven days were added to the year 46 to make the calendar conform again to the movements of the sun, and the leap year was introduced to cure the chief source of error.

Before this long year ended he had been called once more to Spain, where Pompey's eldest son Cnaeus had appeared with Labienus. But even the republicans at Rome could not wish him success, for he was a savage like the young Marius. Caius Cassius himself, who was to plot Caesar's murder, agreed that if they must have a master they would rather have 'the old kindly one.' The decisive battle was fought at Munda on 17th March 45, and not till after a long day's stubborn fighting and terrible carnage did victory declare for Caesar. Labienus fell on the field of battle: the young Pompey escaped wounded, only to be struck down later.

Munda was the last of Caesar's battles. Early in September 45 he was back in the capital, now undisputed master of the Roman world. He had just six months to live—six months of intense and rapid work during which he dealt with the most pressing social, economic, and political problems that had been awaiting solution since Caius Gracchus was cut off in the middle of his attempt to solve them. He had already dealt in 49 with the debt problem by a fair compromise. Creditors lost less than they had feared, debtors got less than they had hoped;

but henceforth no bankrupt could be reduced to personal bondage. The abuses of the corn dole were removed: a means test was introduced, and the number of the recipients was more than halved. It could be used as a political bribe no more. The number of 150,000 was not to be exceeded. The veteran soldiers, men trained by their service in many forms of labour, were settled on the land either in Italy or in colonies abroad, chiefly in Spain and southern Gaul. Preparations were made for refounding Carthage and Corinth, though Caesar did not live to do it. Many of the unemployed of Rome and Italy found work on great schemes of building and public improvements, on the drainage and development of land, on road-making, and on the construction of a great port at Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber. Slavery, the main cause of unemployment and other economic ills, Caesar could not touch, but he made it compulsory that at least one-third of the herdsmen employed on the ranches should henceforth be free men. He enlarged the Senate and made it more representative, introducing into it some of his centurions and even Gauls; but he gave it no power. Local government in Italy was reformed. The provincial towns henceforth would have a real control of their own local affairs. The city of Rome would be but the most splendid among a group of sister municipalities. The good government of the provinces was secured by the abolition of the vicious system of tax-farming and by the appointment of trustworthy governors responsible to himself. All the inhabitants of Italy up to the Alpine border were now Roman citizens, so too were the inhabitants of Gades, upon whom Caesar conferred the coveted privilege, and a number of Transalpine Gauls. It was a new principle, the operation of which would be rapidly extended. Peace, order, good government were his care everywhere, and industry and good morals were encouraged.

But there was still another war to come. The effect of the disaster at Carrhae had to be repaired, and the eastern

frontier secured, and preparations were therefore made for a great Parthian campaign. Caesar was to leave Rome on 19th March 44 to assume command.

It seems that many of the democrats with whom he had acted in old days, and some of the republican party, had indulged a half-hope that when the civil war was over Caesar, following Sulla's example, would lay down his power and restore the old republican constitution. They were disappointed. It was inevitable that they should be. The poorer classes and the provinces knew what they had gained under Caesar's personal rule. They, at any rate, wanted no revival of the oligarchical republic and its monstrous scandals that had pauperized Italy and ruined Asia for the benefit of a little ring of Roman nobles and capitalists. But much of the old odium still clung to the title of king, and it seemed at times that Caesar was toying with the idea of reviving it. He wore the triumphal robe of purple on all State occasions; he sat in the Senate on a golden chair; his head was stamped on the new coinage. Discontent began to show itself in a narrow circle. But he had never been concerned for his personal safety. When the civil war was over he dismissed his bodyguard, and he now moved about the city unprotected. It would be easy to kill him. The bitter Cassius, who had been courteously treated and set free with other Pompeians taken at Pharsalia, could not forgive his generous conqueror and gathered a body of conspirators about him. With difficulty he drew into the plot the studious Marcus Junius Brutus, whom Caesar loved,<sup>1</sup> by appeals to the republican traditions of his house. Once in he was the most resolute of all. Even generals who had given him long and faithful service like Decimus Brutus and Trebonius had turned against him. The Ides (the 15th) of March was the day appointed for the murder. A meeting of the Senate was to be the occasion. The night before Caesar dined with Lepidus, another general, and took Decimus Brutus with him, and Plutarch tells

<sup>1</sup> He was perhaps his son by an intrigue.

how after dinner, 'as he was signing some letters according to his custom, as he reclined at table, there arose a question what sort of death was the best. At which he immediately, before any one could speak, said, "a sudden one."<sup>1</sup> And a sudden one indeed it was to be for him.

The next morning he had an attack of fever; his wife Calpurnia had a premonition of some boding ill; and the auspices were unfavourable—though Caesar's sceptical mind was not likely to set much store by auspices, about which indeed he knew too much. To quiet Calpurnia's anxiety he sent Antony to adjourn the meeting of the Senate. But that would have been the ruin of the plot and the conspirators dispatched Decimus Brutus in haste to persuade him to come. He succeeded. Caesar ordered his litter and arrived just before noon.

When [he] entered, the Senate stood up to show their respect to him, and of Brutus's<sup>2</sup> confederates, some came about his chair and stood behind it, others met him, pretending to add their petitions to those of Tillius Cimber, in behalf of his brother, who was in exile; and they followed him with their joint applications till he came to his seat. When he was sat down, he refused to comply with their requests, and upon their urging him further began to reproach them severely for their importunities, when Tillius, laying hold of his robe with both his hands, pulled it down from his neck, which was the signal for the assault. Casca gave him the first cut in the neck, which was not mortal nor dangerous, as coming from one who at the beginning of such a bold action was probably very much disturbed; Caesar immediately turned about, and laid his hand upon the dagger and kept hold of it. And both of them at the same time cried out, he that received the blow, in Latin: 'Vile Casca, what does this mean?' and he that gave it, in Greek, to his brother: 'Brother, help!' Upon this first onset, those who were not privy to the design were astonished, and their horror and amazement at what they saw were so great that they durst not fly nor assist Caesar, nor so much as speak a word. But those who came prepared for the business enclosed him on every side, with their naked daggers in their hands. Which way soever he turned he met with blows, and saw their swords levelled at his face and eyes, and was encompassed, like a wild beast in the toils, on every side. For it had been agreed they should each of them make a thrust at him, and flesh themselves with his blood; for which reason Brutus also gave him one stab in the groin.<sup>3</sup>

\* <sup>1</sup> *Lives*, vol. ii, p. 575.

<sup>2</sup> Marcus Brutus.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, vol. ii, pp. 577, 578.

Let Shakespeare, who wrote with his Plutarch in front of him, end the story:

This was the most unkindest cut of all;  
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,  
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,  
Quite vanquished him; then burst his mighty heart;  
And in his mantle muffling up his face,  
Even at the base of Pompey's statuë,  
Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.

And the mastery of Rome was once more to fight for. There were to be thirteen more years of intermittent civil war with all its multiplied horrors—for there was now no gentle, patient Caesar to spare Roman blood—ere at the battle of Actium the issue was decided and Octavian—Augustus—at the age of thirty-two succeeded to his great-uncle's task.



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